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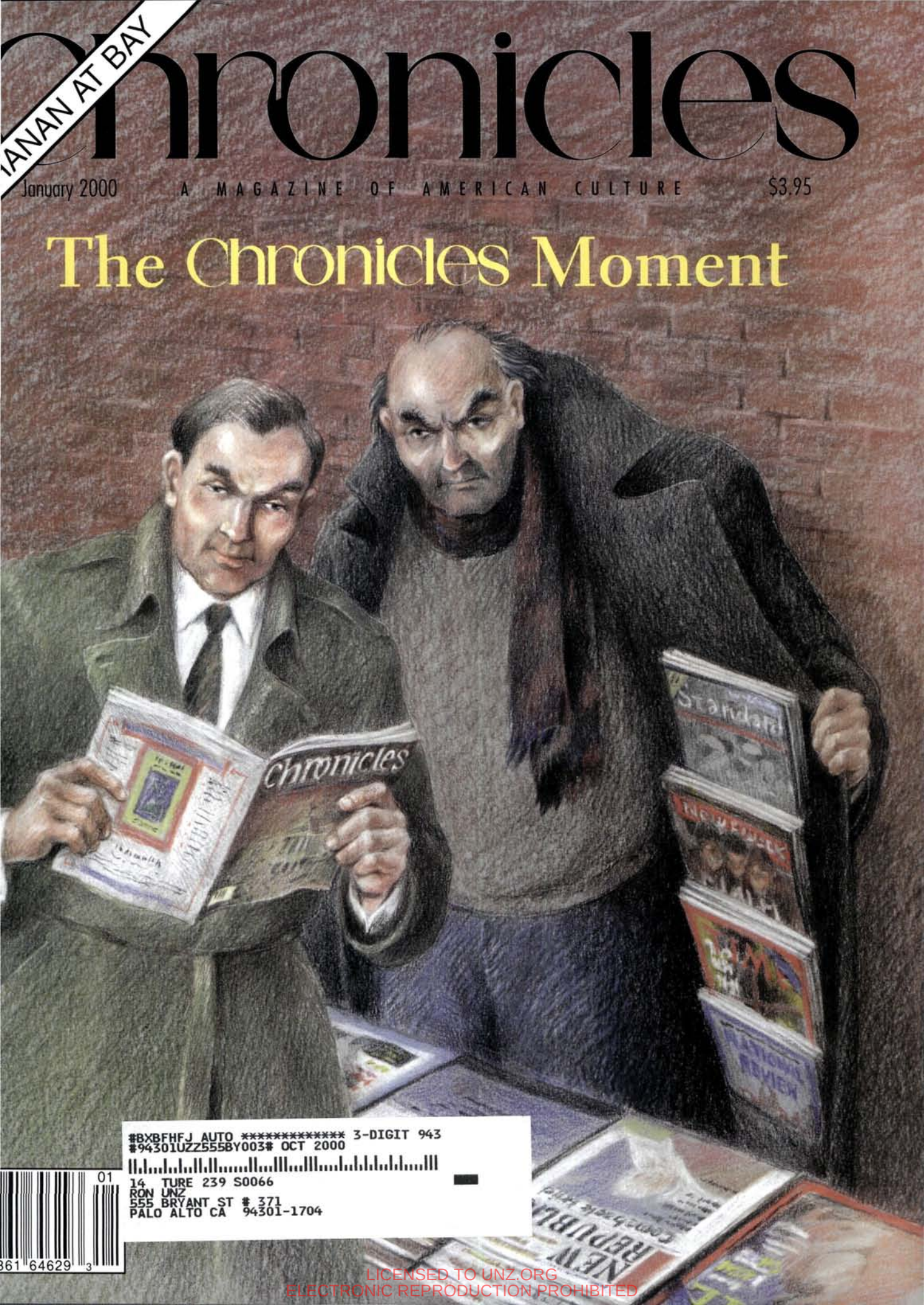

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On "Easter in Palestine"

I wondered, reading the "Letter From Gaza and the West Bank" (*Correspondence*, October), what the author would recommend as a suitable basis for peace negotiations, now so far advanced, other than dismantling the state of Israel. He takes a position that the Palestine Authority has not adopted.

As a Zionist for life, I was saddened by the essay, which, on the Jewish-Israeli side, could find good words only for an apostate from Judaism. And as a faithful practitioner of Judaism, I wondered why this American Protestant so off-handedly dismissed the claim upon the Land of Israel accorded to the People of Israel by Scripture. From Abraham forward, God leaves no doubt that the Land of Israel marks his covenant with the People of Israel—a covenant that Christianity, from Paul in Romans to the present Pope, has never denied.

—*Jacob Neusner*
St. Petersburg, FL

Mr. Jenney Replies:

As Professor Neusner asserts, it is undeniable that the Hebrew Scriptures established a special relationship between the People of Israel and the Land of Israel. However, while a vast majority of Jews—both religious and apostate—have been partisans of Zionism, there has also been a minority, especially in Orthodox sectors, which has regarded the 20th-century Israeli nation-state as a blasphemy, a sham Israel set up by sham Messiahs like Ben-Gurion and company.

Regarding Paul's Letter to the Romans, I find much evidence of the special relationship between God and the People of Israel, and of the affinity between Jews and Christian Gentiles. However, I fail to find any reference in Romans to the Land of Israel, let alone to the modern State of Israel. I suspect that Paul might have had a problem with the modern State of Israel, which was not founded by the person he regarded as the Messiah (i.e., Jesus of Nazareth). Even so, I am not ready to condemn the existence of the State of Israel on theological grounds. However, I will continue to decry the injustices visited upon the Palestinian people during the last 50 years, and the decrying of true injustice always has a theological component.

Further, I am not in favor of the utterly unrealistic idea of "dismantling the state of Israel." Israel is here to stay. It has mostly made peace with its neighbors. It remains to be seen if it will make peace with the people of the occupied territories. Any peace settlement will require sacrifices from both sides. The Palestinians have made a great many sacrifices over the past half century. In 1947, they still had 93 percent of the land, the other seven percent having been settled by Zionists. Then the U.N. partition offered them 44 percent of the land. By the time the fighting ended in 1949, they had only 33 percent left. That was taken in 1967. If all goes well in the peace talks, they may end up with ten percent. The fact that Israelis continue to build settlements in the occupied territories makes me wonder how serious the Israeli government is about making sacrifices.

I'm sorry that Professor Neusner was saddened by my essay. I was saddened by what I saw in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

On the Individual and Protestantism

Donald W. Livingston's insightful sketch of individualism and its history ("The Strange Career of Individualism," October) pays scant attention to what is surely the most important part of the story: the Protestant Reformation. For Livingston, the emergence and development of mod-

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ern individualism has to do primarily with philosophy—Hobbes, Descartes, Paine, Mill—but it was Protestantism's emphasis on personal salvation, and especially private interpretation of Scripture, that laid the groundwork for the "modern ethic of autonomy" identified by Livingston.

The dominant Protestant image of religious devotion, it has been said, is a man sitting alone studying his Bible; the dominant Catholic image ("Catholic" defined broadly to include not only Rome but all the apostolic and liturgical churches) is a parish community standing in line together to receive the Eucharist. Protestantism made history's first sustained attack on the corporate, hierarchical order of medieval Christendom, and from this source flowed the modern ideals that have gradually destroyed Western civilization: equality, democracy, the "free market," the "open society." And most importantly, Protestantism (unlike political philosophy) directly transformed the lives of millions of early-modern Europeans. It did not ask a man to read *Leviathan*, but it did tell him it was acceptable (indeed imperative) to decide for himself the meaning of Sacred Scripture.

I am not denying the importance of Hobbes. But let us remember (as cartoonist Bill Watterson seems to have understood) that Hobbes comes alive only through the power of Calvin's imagination.

—*Daniel Crosby*
St. Louis, MO

Dr. Livingston Replies:

It is true that Protestantism is *an* important part of the story of how the ethic of modern autonomy arose, but I doubt that it is the *most* important part. If we probe deeply into the subatomic physics of the culture of individualism, we find the *philosophic act*, not Protestantism. It was the Catholic tradition that first united philosophy with non-philosophic biblical tradition. St. Augustine sought to understand his biblical faith through neoplatonism; St. Thomas Aquinas, through Aristotle; Catholic liberation theory, through Marx. The possibilities were as endless as the number of philosophical sects. The medieval Church encouraged philosophic-theological disputation. As Catholic doctrine became more and more theoretical, the philosophic act began to break free from biblical and Church tradition. In time, Church tradition could no longer contain the disposition of philosophy to independence. Protestant questioning of authority was only one expression of this disposition of philosophy to seek radical autonomy. The rationalism of the Catholic Descartes was another. Protestantism (especially in its more radical forms, such as Puritanism) is simply the emergence of the philosophic act in its religious aspect.

The incorporation of philosophy is one of the glories of Catholicism, but when the Church took philosophy into her bosom, she was saddled with a troublesome servant that could not be controlled. It is no good complaining that Protestantism subverted the unity of Christendom when the source of that subversion had been cultivated in the Church all along. The most powerful arguments for atheism ever were given by French Jesuits in the 17th century. To be sure, they were presented to be refuted, but is it any wonder that many would not be convinced? Had there been no Protestantism at all, Catholicism would have generated as many secular rationalisms as we have today. This is not true of Eastern Christianity. The Orthodox tradition never took on the theoretical mode of the Western Church. And so it never spawned a Reformation or rationalisms. When rationalisms came, they were imports from the West. I make no judgment about any of this, for I know that Eve was the first philosopher.

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

PAT BUCHANAN's October 25 announcement that he would seek the presidential nomination of the Reform Party was greeted with contempt by Republican commentators. After all, Buchanan has twice failed to capture the Republican nomination, and in his third time out, he barely registered in the polls. His moment had passed, they argued, or perhaps he'd never had one; and this latest move was only about Pat's ego—oh, and maybe the $12.5 million in federal matching funds that the Reform Party will receive in 2000. And yet . . .

"Go, Pat, Go!" screamed the crowds that gathered at Buchanan campaign stops from Minnesota to Louisiana, from New York City to Macomb County, Michigan. The local press in each town has been stunned. Buchanan has been "mobbed" by "hundreds of supporters"—many former Republicans, almost as many former Democrats—and enthusiastically embraced by state and local Reform Party officials (and not a few national ones—former Reform vice presidential candidate Pat Choate is co-chairing Buchanan's campaign, and Matt Sawyer, an expert in election law who served as house counsel to Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996, is performing the same function for Pat). In Louisiana, the state Reform Party chairman reported that the number of registered Reform Party members in the Bayou State *doubled* in the two weeks after Buchanan's announcement. In Macomb County, home to the country's largest concentration of "Reagan Democrats" (most of whom have returned to the party of the jackass for the past two presidential elections), the message was clear: Pat could have brought the Reagan Democrats back into the Republican fold; now, the majority intend to follow him to the Reform Party.

Political scientists have noted that the rise of any significant new political party is always preceded by a period of "dealignment," of dissatisfaction with the dominant parties. Here in Winnebago County, Illinois, two Republican officeholders recently commissioned a poll which asked voters, among other things, to state their party affiliation. Over 40 percent replied "independent"; neither the Democrats nor the Republicans broke 25 percent. Does this mean Winnebago County is a hotbed of Buchananism? No. But it does indicate a broad-based discontent with the "two-party system," a discontent which, for the foreseeable future, only Pat Buchanan is in a position to exploit.

Still, Pat has an uphill battle even to match Ross Perot's vote totals in 1992. Turning out crowds at campaign stops is one thing; turning out voters in a general election is quite another. Of course, Buchanan does have some advantages that Perot did not. The Reform Party will almost certainly be on the ballot in every state, which will make it hard (though

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not impossible) for the Presidential Debate Commission to justify excluding Buchanan, as it did Perot in 1996. Buchanan won't be running against an incumbent president, as Perot has both times. Even accepting federal matching funds—and the spending limitations that go with them—may turn out to be a blessing in disguise. As both Perot and Steve Forbes have proved, money doesn't necessarily translate into votes. But every disaffected Democrat or Republican who sends Pat five dollars will almost certainly vote for him come November. The more broad-based Buchanan's fundraising efforts, and the *smaller* his average contribution, the greater his electoral base.

We've always argued here at *Chronicles* that there are no political solutions to cultural problems. Even a rigorous system of tariffs, for instance, wouldn't address the cultural problem of free trade: that Americans think of themselves as consumers first, and as members of local communities, states, and a nation second, or not at all. But a vigorous and viable Buchanan campaign (or even—commit the thoughtcrime—a Buchanan presidency) could prove more of a cultural force than a political one, refocusing public debate from narrow policy issues and personality politics to the broader questions that must be addressed if our nation is to survive: preserving national sovereignty, renouncing our foreign adventurism, limiting immigration, protecting what's left of our industrial base, returning power to states and local communities, curtailing the tyranny of the federal government, restoring the Constitution of the Framers.

The Old Republic was laid to rest at Appomattox Court House; the Northeastern-based commercial republic that took its place perished in the Great Depression and New Deal; today, the middle-class, Middle American industrial democracy that has characterized postwar America is crumbling. Unless we stop the transformation now, it won't be much longer before America—in any of its historic forms—ceases to be a nation.

If not now, when? If not Pat, who? Go, Pat, go.

—*Scott P. Richert*

THE FUTURE OF NATO looms large in the Clinton administration's attempt to create an autonomous zone of American military presence and political influence in the Balkans that would be independent of the ups and downs of Washington's relations with its Western European partners. By imposing its own post-Yugoslav architecture, this administration hopes to ensure that its Balkan bridgehead will outlive the eventual demise of NATO.

While anti-traditionalist, "globalist" neoimperialism provides the ideological underpinning for the obsessive anti-Serb bias of U.S. policy, the desire to establish an effectively irreversible *Pax Americana* in Southeast Europe is the "rational" basis of the strategy (which also has its Turkish, Russian, and Middle Eastern components). This unsubtle exercise in *divide et impera* creates instability that will demand the presence of its creator as the guarantor of the status quo. By creating a string of small, highly dependent, and inherently weak statelets and quasi-states—Dayton-Bosnia, "Kosova," and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia today, with an "independent" Montenegro, an "autonomous" Sanjak, and a "cantonized" Vojvodina soon to follow—the United States is ensuring that Tuzla, Pristina, and Skopje will remain its assets even if it has to close its bases in Kaiserslautern, Frankfurt-Main, and Pirmasens.

One consequence of this approach, which culminated in the bombing campaign against Serbia last spring, is that the demise of NATO is now more likely. Despite the self-congratulatory rhetoric at the NATO summit in Toronto last October, the writing is on the wall. Only a week later, on October 11, the *New York Times* reported that "a plan to create a defense arm for the 15-nation European Union is stirring fears among American civilian and military officials." While couching their comments in the language of economic efficiency and prudent management, U.S. officials privately admit that the key issue concerns command-and-control structures that may eventually rob NATO of any meaning.

Intra-European military cooperation outside of NATO has been increasing for some years, initiated by a Franco-German program that created joint units. But last June, at a summit in Cologne, European Union leaders decided to take concrete steps by the end of 2000 to build up a capacity for "autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces" in future regional crises, even if the United States decides to stay out.

Senior NATO diplomats admit that the Cologne decisions created concern in Washington. In addition, high-ranking American officers at NATO headquarters are unhappy about a French plan for a European general staff and a military council of 15 European Union ambassadors. At the end of July, President Jacques Chirac sent all other E.U. countries—including four non-NATO members—an "action plan" proposing both civilian and military standing committees for a new European defense system. The plan also calls for "a European military staff progressively organized to assume the triple functions of oversight, analysis and planning." Concerted efforts by U.S. officials to undermine the French initiative soon followed, with Britain predictably siding with the Clinton administration.

The French argue that it is unacceptable for Europe to spend 60 percent as much as America spends on defense, but get only a small fraction of the defense capability in return. The reply from Washington and London is that the Europeans ought to carry out a "defense capabilities initiative" within NATO to reshape the alliance's fighting forces, rather than develop a defense structure parallel to the alliance. "I don't think the debate will be resolved anywhere else but within NATO," the new E.U. commissioner for external affairs, Christopher Patten of Great Britain, declared at the European Commission in Brussels last fall.

The U.S. initiative is hardly more popular with the Europeans than the French "action plan." It would demand significant increases in military spending by NATO's European members—in Germany's case, up to $22 billion more over the next ten years—without any major change in the political and military chains of command. The political price may prove even higher, especially in Germany, where the left remains deeply divided over the country's role in NATO in general, and its participation in the war against Serbia in particular.

"NATO bombs that destroyed the economy and infrastructure in Serbia were aimed against the Serbian people," declares Oskar Lafontaine, the former leader of the German Social Democratic Party, in his new book, *The Heart Beats on the Left Side*. In excerpts published by the Bonn daily *Die Welt*, Lafontaine accuses NATO of violating the U.N. Charter as well as its own, and of flouting international law. Condemning the "cynical, pretentiously moral lamenting"

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of Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping during the attack, Lafontaine calls it "the typical zeal of turncoats, of former fervent pacifists who are now even more fervent advocates of war."

Similar sentiments abound among the new members of the alliance, particularly in Hungary and the Czech Republic, as well as along the southern flank, notably in Italy. The overwhelming unpopularity of NATO among most Greeks hardly needs restating; were it not for the (probably mistaken) belief that being a member of NATO offers protection against Turkey, Athens would have left a long time ago.

Only time will tell whether the unease on the European left will find its equivalent in a traditionalist backlash against the "new" NATO; but a reaction based on the desire to defend the last vestiges of the Westphalian order against the post-national, post-civilized ideologues of universal human rights and global free trade is necessary. Europe needs its own Buchanans, able to talk to the Lafontaines and willing to forge a common front with them to devise a strategy for the Old Continent's survival in the coming century. Contrary to Chris Patten's views, that strategy has to be outside NATO—indeed against it.

Once the Free World's bulwark against communist aggression, NATO has now become an aggressive tool of the "benevolent global hegemonists" in Washington and their European quislings. It has lost more than every political and military reason to exist; it has lost the right to do so.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE is by now a running gag—or rather a running sore. Like the Prize for Literature, given nearly every year to an untalented anti-writer as obscure in his own country as he is in the rest of the world, the Peace Prize is generally awarded to failures, like the 1998 winners from Northern Ireland who are no longer speaking to each other, or to complete cynics like Henry Kissinger who consigned an allied and dependent nation to devastation and slaughter. In 1906, the prize went to Theodore Roosevelt, the bullying imperialist who once opined, "What this country needs is a good war"; the 1919 recipient was Woodrow Wilson, who had just dragged his country through an unnecessary European war whose conclusion would set the stage for the rise of the Nazis and round two of the European bloodbath.

Occasionally the prize for literature has gone to authentic writers (Eliot, Mauriac, Camus, Andric), and—less frequently—the Peace Prize is given to some genuinely humane person like Albert Schweitzer and (unless I am mistaken) Ralph Bunche. This year, however, is not one of the exceptions. Günter Grass, leftist activist and propagandist, received the Prize for Literature, and the recipient of the Peace Prize is *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Doctors Without Borders). Grass, a self-described "*Spätaufklärer*" (illuminatus-come-lately) who hates his country and opposed its reunification (which spoiled the communist experiment in the east), is a perfect match for the doctors who hate borders and the nations they protect.

Everyone has heard of these humble men of healing who wander the world looking for sick people to minister to, and although the *Weekly Standard* has gushed over the wisdom of the committee, the borderless doctors (like most global do-gooders) are practicing charity according to a double standard. While MSF claims to reject political labels and entanglements, the very title of the organization more than implies its members' contempt for nations and historic traditions. Like the cynical doctors of fiction and film (think of William Holden in John Ford's *The Horse Soldiers*, Bones on *Star Trek*), these "scientists" look at a world of love, poetry, and faith and see so many carcasses to be dosed or cut. Nations are only conspiracies or bands of gangsters determined to make the lives of their own and other peoples miserable.

Any pretense to humanity or impartiality was dropped in late October when the *Médecins* decided to expel the Greek branch for sending doctors to Serbia during the NATO attack on Yugoslavia. MSF was thrown out of Kosovo last July when it refused to communicate with or through the Yugoslav government, but only with nongovernmental organizations. This was a blatantly political move on the part of MSF, implicitly rejecting Yugoslavia's sovereignty and slyly conniving at the "legitimacy" of the self-styled government of Ibrahim Rugova.

Smarting from the Serbs' rejection, MSF was angered when the Greek branch was able to negotiate an exception in its favor. The Greeks may have technically violated MSF rules which prohibit working under government auspices, but this is hardly the first occasion when the organization's doctors, officially or not, were forced to work within state guidelines, and the mask of nonviolent partiality slipped more than a little when some of its members were caught in 1993 near Srebrenica with a cache of ammunition carefully concealed under blankets and medicine chests. MSF blamed, variously, the Serbs and their Muslim driver.

The Greek physicians do admit that they made use of the friendly ties which have existed between the two Orthodox countries, but they insist they were only living up to the MSF charter, which promises to help both sides in a conflict regardless of ethnicity. But in expelling their Greek colleagues, *Médecins Sans Frontières*—however inconsistent they have been in their humanitarianism—have shown themselves consistent to their globalist vision that refuses to recognize the significance of nations. I am tempted to say that the Peace Prize should be taken away from an organization that has so disgraced it, but the Prize is itself a badge of dishonor, and MSF should wear it with pride.

—*Thomas Fleming*

VLADIMIR PUTIN's performance as Russian premier had, by the first of November, won him high approval. The ex-KGB professional, publicly tapped by Boris Yeltsin as his preferred successor, has begun to show the political acumen that attracted the attention of Yeltsin and his "family," the presidential entourage, who are very worried about the anti-family coalition formed by Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and Yevgeni Primakov, whom the Kremlin now fears far more than the Communists. Putin's task is to undermine Primakov, and the Kremlin may have concocted an appropriate crisis to help him do it.

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The plot—as described by the many Kremlin deep throats looking to distance themselves from the family as the end of Yeltsin's term approaches—goes like this: Disappointed by Sergei Stepashin's unwillingness to do their dirty work, Yeltsin and the family needed a suitable replacement. Putin is an old KGB hand with great experience in collecting—and effectively using—*kompromat* ("compromising material"), and his connections in the "power ministries" (Defense, Internal Affairs, Intelligence, Security) could prove useful. To undermine the popular Primakov, the Kremlin had to stage an event which would place the spotlight on their man, showing him to be as adept at geopolitics as the wily "Primo," distracting voters from the Kremlin's involvement in the Bank of New York-Mabatex scandals, and, finally, uniting Russians behind their government. The Kremlin's splendid little war in the Caucasus was made to order.

Chronicles readers are already familiar with a related plan involving Kremlin courtier Boris A. Berezovsky (BAB), who probably made use of his ties with Chechen warlords to encourage—and, along with Osama bin Laden and assorted Muslim states, help pay for—the Islamists to launch their invasion of Dagestan last summer. BAB may also have been involved in planning the series of terrorist bombings that left some 300 Russians dead this fall. The idea seems to have been to push the Kremlin to declare a state of emergency and then call off the upcoming elections, but somewhere along the line the plot took an unexpected turn, as the Russian General Staff pushed events in a new direction.

The *generalitet* has been thirsting for revenge since the 1994-96 Chechen debacle, which left the Russian army humiliated and transformed the mountainous republic into a criminal wonderland where the chief growth industry is kidnapping and the oil refineries are manned by Russian techno-slaves. The combat in Dagestan and NATO's bombing of Kosovo deeply impressed Moscow's generals, who are neither as stupid nor as clumsy as they appeared during the Chechen fiasco. The fighting in Dagestan turned the tables on the Chechens. With the Islamists now cast in the role of the aggressor, the Russian public supported efforts to turn back the Islamic hordes. Then came the bombings. The terrorists, according to sources in the Federal Security Service, employed a very rare ingredient called hexogen, which is used by the Russian military in its latest generation of munitions and is stored in a few high-security defense plants. The fear ignited by the terrorists bombings and the momentum gained by the military during the Dagestan fight gave the *generalitet* the opening it wanted, first invading Chechnya (ostensibly to set up a "security zone" in the third of Chechen territory north of the Terek River), then expanding the operation, blasting the Chechen "infrastructure" to bits, and setting off a mass exodus from the rebel republic. Putin and the *generalitet* closely followed NATO's blueprint, setting up a "Russian Information Center" to carefully ration—and manipulate—information from the Caucasus battleground. In the meantime, Putin has talked back to the NATO and E.U. busybodies, telling them that if NATO can act as it has, so can Russia. The Russian public is eating this up, and Putin's poll numbers are now nudging Primakov's.

Still, the Kremlin probably looks at Putin as a stopgap who can put the brakes on the Luzhkov-Primakov alliance, shifting support from their Fatherland-All Russia political block to the Putin-approved (and BAB-organized) Unity movement before the December parliamentary elections. After that, much depends on how things go in Chechnya. Leaks about the "RosInformCenter" falsifying official casualty reports may already be undermining public backing of the Kremlin's police action. In any case, bombing villages and storming Grozny, the Chechen capital, which the Russians will have to do if they wish to force the rebel republic back into the fold, are two very different animals, and Putin's poll numbers could take a nose dive as quickly as they took off. If so, the Kremlin could dump Putin and back the "hidden successor," Unity's Sergei Shoygu, who, as minister of Emergency Situations, has been slowly cultivating public good will by aiding the growing number of displaced, hungry, and just plain exhausted people in this suffering land. The "family" does, after all, take care of its own.

—*Denis Petrov*

PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION is back in the news, and for the first time, there appears to be some hope for the pro-life side. Of all the extraordinary things that the United States Supreme Court has done in the past few decades, none matches its 1973 decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*. Justice Blackmun's majority opinion articulated a rule pulled, if not from one of his bodily orifices, then out of thin air. The states could not prohibit abortions during the first trimester of a pregnancy; they could regulate them to preserve the health of the mother during the second trimester; and they could regulate and even prohibit them during the third trimester, in order to protect the fetus's interest in its "potential life."

The arbitrariness of *Roe*, which no constitutional scholar could plausibly defend, put the "right to abortion" in some jeopardy. During the late 80's and early 90's, the Supreme Court appeared to be edging toward admitting its mistake and overruling the case. Then, in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey* (1992), a decision which rivals *Roe* for sheer judicial audacity, the Court, in an unsigned plurality opinion (in which Justices Souter, Kennedy, and O'Connor joined, none having the courage to claim it as his or her own), abandoned *Roe*'s trimester standard, though not the "right to abortion." The *Casey* plurality declared that states could prohibit "nontherapeutic" abortions performed on fetuses who had reached the point of viability outside the womb, but henceforward no other abortion restrictions would be tolerated if they imposed an "undue burden" on the mother's "right" to terminate her pregnancy. No one knows what an "undue burden" is, other than a license for judicial lawmaking, although the *Casey* plurality did suggest (rather unhelpfully) that "A finding of an undue burden is a shorthand for the conclusion that a state regulation has the purpose or effect of placing a substantial obstacle in the path of a woman seeking an abortion of a nonviable fetus."

You now know almost enough constitutional law to decide that pesky partial-birth abortion question. This unspeakably grisly procedure, known in medical parlance as an "intact dilation and extraction" or "D&X," has been prohibited by the legislatures of 30 states. Does a state's prohibition of this practice impose an "undue burden" on a woman's right to abortion?

Two-thirds of the 30 state laws have been found unconstitutional by courts applying the "undue burden" standard, or on the grounds that they were so vague that they interfered with procedures other than partial-birth abortion. But some

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of the statutes have been upheld, most notably in the aptly titled *Hope Clinic* v. *Ryan* decision rendered in late October. Writing for a sharply divided majority of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, Judge Frank Easterbrook (one of the most intellectually gifted federal judges) declared that the bans on partial-birth abortion in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana met constitutional muster. They imposed no undue burden on women's rights, said Easterbrook, because the statutes contained an exception where the life of the mother was in danger, because the purpose of the statutes was clear enough, because other means of abortion were available, and because there was credible medical evidence that there were no health benefits to the partial-birth abortion method.

Other federal circuit courts, passing on the same issue, had found an "undue burden" to be present on the grounds that the statutes provided no exceptions for preserving the health of the mother (which could, conceivably, include the preservation of mental health by freeing the mother from the stress of raising another child). Some of these courts also took the position that there was adequate medical evidence that partial-birth abortion was, in some cases, safer for the mother than other forms of late-pregnancy termination (such as, for instance, dilating the uterus, then inserting instruments to kill and dismember the fetus while it is entirely inside the womb, before extracting it piece by piece). In an unusually blistering dissent in the *Hope Clinic* case, Chief Judge Richard Posner (also a gifted jurist, and Easterbrook's former colleague at the University of Chicago Law School), sided with the courts which had found an "undue burden" in partial-birth abortion prohibitions. Posner even went so far as to state that the real purpose of partial-birth abortion statutes was to cast doubt upon the constitutional reasoning of the Supreme Court itself. *Just so.*

The conflict in the federal courts means that the Supreme Court will probably have to resolve the dispute; if the Court does not duck the issue, we can expect a partial-birth abortion decision within a couple of years. Like so many other issues in constitutional law, this one may well turn on who is appointing Supreme Court justices beginning in January 2001. A decision on partial-birth abortion would also offer the Court an opportunity to abandon the maddening "undue burden" standard, or even to overturn *Roe* v. *Wade* itself. Catherine Weiss, director of the ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project, called Judge Easterbrook's opinion in *Hope Clinic* "heartbreaking." Collen Connell, another ACLU lawyer, said it was "radical." But State Senator Scott Fitzgerald, who wrote the Wisconsin law upheld in *Hope Clinic*, labeled Easterbrook's decision "groundbreaking," and Wisconsin's attorney in the case said it was "well-reasoned." The *New York Times* argued that the decision was "a serious assault on the reproductive freedom guaranteed women." Janet Benshoof, president of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, claimed that *Hope Clinic* had declared "that fetuses throughout pregnancy are more important than women." Ms. Benshoof also stated that "[T]his is the Republican Party platform at work" and, with presumably unintended irony, that "This is judicial activism run amok."

The real running amok occurred in 1973, of course, and the frenzy of *Hope Clinic*'s critics may indicate their fear that a future Supreme Court may come to that realization.

—*Stephen B. Presser*

OBITER DICTA: Your dream vacation in Montenegro may become a reality if tentative plans we are making come to pass. Orthodox Church leaders in the former Yugoslavia have proposed a joint conference with The Rockford Institute to discuss the decline of the West and what it means for the world. Participants would include *Chronicles* editor **Thomas Fleming** and foreign affairs editor **Srdja Trifkovic**, as well as several leading Serbian intellectuals. The tentative date is in late January. Two sessions would be held, one in Belgrade, the other in Montenegro. Conference attendees would also have the chance to study the art treasures of ancient churches and monasteries in the region as well as to view up close the results of the NATO attack. For further information, please call **Aaron Wolf** at (815) 964-5811.

Two poets grace our pages this month. **Brian Kirkpatrick** is a physician and neuroscientist who lives in Baltimore. An occasional contributor to the *Correspondence* section of *Chronicles* (most recently in November 1999), Dr. Kirkpatrick is completing a novel.

Constance Rowell Mastores of Oakland, California, is our second poet this month. Her poetry has appeared in the *Lyric*, *Press*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Boulevard*, and *Artweek*, among others.

Chronicles is illustrated this month by St. Petersburg native **Anatol Woolf**, who, in addition to freelance work, has designed sets for theaters in Russia and provided illustrations for St. Petersburg Textbook Publishers. Since coming to America in 1987, Mr. Woolf has been a frequent contributing artist to *Chronicles*, as well as to the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times*, *Policy Review*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Legal Times*, and *Cricket*. Mr. Woolf works with a variety of materials, from watercolors to pencil to acrylic. Further samples of his work are available on his Web page: *www.netcom.com/~a.woolf/*.

BOOK OF NEXT MONTH

Our book for next month is *The Sun Also Rises*, Ernest Hemingway's first and best novel, which was published in 1926. Jake Barnes, rendered impotent by World War I, tries to retain his manhood by doing his job, fishing with the boys, and living by his code. The story of his failures makes this the most nearly perfect novel written by an American.

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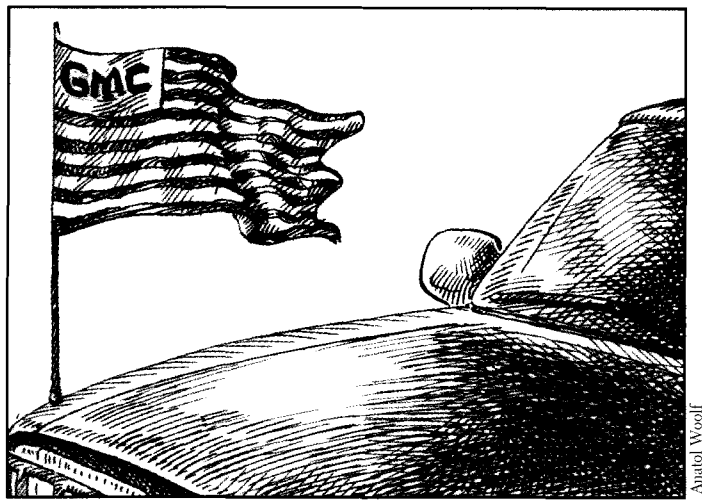

Anatol Woolf

In the Time of the Breaking of Nations

by Thomas Fleming

"We will bury you," warned Nikita Khrushchev in the 1950's, but in the end, it is America's NATO imperium that is burying Serbs under the rubble of Novi Sad and Belgrade and Americans under the red tape of the New World Order.

The march of globalization has proceeded without effective resistance but not without criticism, and dissidents on both left and right have been calling for a new nationalism. This appeal has resonated with sensible people who are disgusted with the loss of economic sovereignty, which has been betrayed by NAFTA and GATT, who are alarmed by the unchecked flow of legal and illegal immigrants, and who are disgusted with the internal subversion of our culture by multiculturalism in the schools and by a caste system of ethnic privileges that demoralizes European-Americans without actually helping non-European minorities.

But opposition to internationalism is not quite the same thing as nationalism, and the enemy of my enemy is not always my friend. To oppose internationalism with nationalism *per se* is to make a false dichotomy. It is perfectly possible to uphold the dignity of the nation in matters of trade and immigration, while at the same time belonging to an international religion like Christianity. Christians who oppose the New World Order may also believe that the national government has far too much power over the states and cities where real life is lived—outside the Beltway and a half day's drive from Saltwater—but they are not necessarily prepared either to declare that the nation is everything or to deny that it is anything at all.

Christians ought to be deeply suspicious of nationalism and globalism, both of which developed in the course of the 18th century and were advocated by the bloody-handed leaders of the French Revolution who killed each other over whether the Revolution represented the revival of the French nation or the dawning of the brotherhood of man. In the end, the nationalists won, and while Napoleon pretended to be liberating the captive nations of the Holy Roman Empire, he was really only replacing Austria with France, Habsburgs with Bonapartes. Stalin and Trotsky played out the same homicidal farce in their struggle for control of the Soviet Union. Again, the nationalists won out, as they did in Germany, Italy, and the United States, each nation creating in the 1930's (as James Burnham and John Flynn observed) its own form of national socialism, which became the dominant form of government in developed nations like the United States, Sweden, and Israel as well as in most Third World countries, where a series of strong men—Perón, Nasser, Qaddafi, Mobutu—combined welfare policies with aggressive nationalism.

Classical liberals and libertarians, in criticizing the new nationalists, take their stand on the individual and defend economic liberty against what they call "protectionist" legislation. They may oppose, as Paul Craig Roberts does, the World Trade Organization and write critically of NAFTA, as Llewellyn Rockwell has done, because those schemes are not truly instruments of market freedom; but in the end, classical liberals object to any economic plan that increases the power of a national government to interfere in the market choices of individual citi-

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zens. While they often, if not always, go too far in their advocacy of markets over families and communities, libertarians and classical liberals are not wrong to remind us of the dangers of governments which may speak the language of national interest but more often cater to their richest and most powerful clients.

"Nationalism" has often been used as a rallying cry for special interests who identify themselves with the nation. There are businessmen who still believe that "what's good for General Motors [or Microsoft] is good for the nation," and there are nationalist political leaders who have divided the Western nations against each other and made alliances with the sworn enemies of Western civilization. There is no need to cite France's support of the Turks against Austria when it is just as easy to bring up the series of wars, nationalist revolutions, and nationalist/fascist movements that have set the English and the Germans at each other's throats twice in this century and even divided nations against themselves. The fact that nationalisms often sow the dragon's teeth of discord between a nation's citizens should be of some concern to nationalists who oppose regionalist movements on the grounds they are divisive.

But far more significant than the European bloodbaths or the ethnic and religious antagonisms of a divided France (or of a divided America) is the tendency of American nationalism to cut us off from the broader civilization that we are part of, that we must be part of, if we are to avoid sinking into barbarism—or worse. After all, other barbarian and savage peoples (such as the ancient Germans and the American natives) had evolved their own cultural, moral, and religious traditions over a period of millennia; we Americans, on the other hand, have only consumerism and materialism to fall back on.

Some nationalists are fond, it is true, of appealing to the solidarity of people of European ancestry, and there are little journals and cliques of Euro-American activists who draw up lists of ethnic slurs against the Irish or the Poles or against white people in general. "Euro-Americans, Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains"—and nothing to gain but the ethnic hyphen which functions as the "de" or "von" of the old nobility.

Before rushing in to join the chorus of complaining minorities, perhaps we should pause a moment to reflect on what the future may hold in store for us if a Euro-nationalist movement succeeded. To stand up for your family, kinfolk, and people is a natural and wholesome activity; to become obsessed with what some out-group has done to you—whether they are Jews, immigrants, or blacks—is to lose part of your humanity.

Polarization can also be a problem for regionalist movements like the Lega Nord in Italy, which sometimes manifests a barely concealed contempt for Italians from the South. Since the Northerners conquered Naples and Sicily and forced them to become part of an amalgamated Italian kingdom, the attitude is hard to justify. What is worse, some North Italians now like to think of themselves as Swiss rather than Italian. This is not only an ethnic fairy tale, but it also tends to alienate Northern Italians from the brilliant civilization that all Italians can claim as their birthright. Some of these Italians-who-would-be-Swiss are like the American racialists who watch reruns of *Conan the Barbarian* and despise the Mediterranean peoples who created our civilization. "Better white than right" is their motto.

The Lega's strongest argument is regional diversity. When Italy was broken up into hundreds of separate quarreling states, it produced the greatest civilization on earth since the ancient Greeks, who also lived in warring city-states. Unfortunately, the divisions in Greece made them prey to the Macedonians and the Romans, and the Italian states were repeatedly invaded and subjugated by Spaniards, Frenchmen, and Austrians. A Lombard in 1800 might well desire the unification of Italy on exactly the same grounds as his descendants today use to justify its breakup.

It is a mistake to be doctrinaire on questions like secession, trade, or foreign intervention. Pat Buchanan has gone from free-trading Cold Warrior to peace-loving protectionist. In reality, Buchanan has always been a patriot, neither more nor less. When most patriotic Americans thought the primary challenge to American freedom came from the expansion of communism, he was a strong interventionist. After the end of the Cold War, when the main threat came from globalization, he had the insight and agility to turn around and face the new enemy. This is not nationalism *per se* (as some of his overzealous advisors are claiming), but only a prudent defense of the country that he loves.

Many writers have distinguished between nationalism and patriotism, but they do not always make a coherent and convincing argument. If we begin with the words, however, some obvious differences do emerge. *Patria* is the good old word for homeland—Greek, Latin, and in German as *Vaterland*. It is the land of one's fathers and the land whose traditions and customs and rules represent a kind of paternal authority, whether power is exercised by the king or by a parliament.

The Latin *natio*, derived from the verb *nascor* ("to be born"), originally signified birth and then came also to mean people connected by blood: a tribe or race. If *patria* is primarily a social and cultural concept, *natio* is essentially biological and racial. As an English synonym for homeland or country, "nation" enters rather late in the game. The OED lists the first occurrence in this sense as late 17th century but adds "rare." When "nation" is used to mean country, it almost inevitably implies the desire to unite the scattered fragments of the nation into a single state and, by extension, to suppress alien nations within the nation-state.

The older concept of *patria*, while not immune to ethnocentrism or territorial ambition, has a different flavor. It was quite possible to be a good Czech who loved his country while at the same time being loyal to the Hapsburg empire and willing to get along with his Slovak and German neighbors. A Czech nationalist, however, would work to unite the Czechs into a single state, expel or subjugate the Germans, and compel the Slovaks to adopt the Czech language and Czech culture—which is exactly what happened in Czechoslovakia between the two world wars and, to a lesser extent, after the collapse of communism. One nationalism always begets another, and the Slovaks are now independent.

In the United States during the 1850's, there were patriotic Yankees who loved New England, were loyal to the American republic, but took a live-and-let-live approach to the South. Nathaniel Hawthorne was of this type, as was his friend President Franklin Pierce. Increasingly, however, as a Yankee-U.S. nationalism developed, it spawned venomous anti-Southern, anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant, anti-black movements—the Know-Nothing and Republican parties—that in turn inspired the Southern nationalism that made the crack-up of 1860 inevitable. Ever since, U.S. nationalist politics have suffered from an ugly strain of chauvinism, eugenics, and—more and more—a *revanchiste* spirit against various minority groups.

Teddy Roosevelt, the great nationalist, racist, and eugenicist

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so much admired by the editors of the *Weekly Standard*, said there could be no 50-percent Americans—no "Jewish-Americans," for example—only 100 percenters. And the example of TR, who shamelessly promoted America's conquest of the Philippines, also proves how easily nationalism slides into imperialism.

Christians usually end up being a main target of nationalist ideology, and the most powerful and successful nationalist movements of the past 500 years have nearly always grown at the expense of either a specific Christian establishment or of the Christian religion in general: Elizabethan England was built out of the ruins of the monasteries; the French Revolution nationalized the Church and then turned it into the cult of reason; the Italian government, during the *Risorgimento*, expelled the Jesuits, confiscated monasteries, convents, and schools, and persecuted the Church.

In pluralist America, we have been comparatively safe—though some nationalists of the 20's and 30's tried to shut down religious schools—but liberal nationalists today have eliminated school prayer and tried to push all vestiges of religion out of the public square. There is no reason to believe that Christians would fare any better under a right-wing nationalist regime; they certainly did not do well in the Third Reich.

There is little left of the old American *patria* of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, and the national culture represented by Mark Twain and William Dean Howells, Henry Adams and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, is as foreign to us now as medieval Provence. Any attempt to create or impose a national culture will be a dangerous exercise in fascism that would end up destroying all the little peculiarities that give American life its savor.

Then what is to be done? Right-wing nationalists invite us to invent a white or Euro identity as artificial as the euro monetary unit, to establish it in schools and in the media at the expense of regional and foreign cultural identities. To heighten the national sense, other groups will have to be denigrated, their languages and cultures outlawed, and the reinvented nation—to prove its mettle—will embark on a series of imperial crusades to Americanize the world.

Patriots would agree with the nationalists in pressing for immigration control, rejecting multiculturalism, and recognizing the dominant religious/cultural traditions of the old America, but they would leave authentic traditions alone. (Even the *Front National* recognizes the historical and cultural importance of the regions of France.) Above all, the patriot would not waste his time castigating people outside his country's traditions but would concentrate on rebuilding those traditions—of literature and art, of manners and morals, or (to drop down to the lowest level) of sanitation and the rule of law. Celebration and cultivation would be the dominant note, not denigration. This is exactly what I do not see in nationalist publications such as the *Weekly Standard* or *American Renaissance*—two groups that resemble each other more than most people suspect.

The highest patriotic credo used to be summed up in the phrase: "My country, right or wrong; and where it is wrong, set it right." Conservatives of every stripe have spent too much time complaining about what other people have done to make our country wrong. Perhaps we should leave the whining to the brownshirts and the neoconservatives who know only how to hate and set about the task of making our country right.

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DICTATIONS

"Patriots and Other Scoundrels"

Samuel Johnson's description of patriotism as "the last refuge of a scoundrel" is frequently quoted by globalist liberals who cannot imagine any normal person actually loving his country. Occasionally, some conservative critic responds by saying that Johnson was really condemning nationalism or false patriotism, but—as usual—both liberals and conservatives are wrong. In Johnson's day, "patriotism" was the rallying cry of the Whigs who opposed the royal prerogative, corrupt and hypocritical politicians (as Johnson regarded them) who wanted to increase their own power at the expense of the nation's constitutional stability.

Johnson defined "patriot" as "a factious disturber of the government"; a century earlier, Dryden had offered the definition: "one who would by law supplant his Prince." Such men were not merely scoundrels; they were diabolical. "The first Whig was the devil," according to the great lexicographer, because—like the serpent in the Garden—Whigs inculcated the principle of disobedience.

When the American rebels of 1776—most of them Whigs to the core—called themselves "patriots," they were not intentionally being disingenuous, though it is hard to see the patriotism in a group of English immigrants rebelling against the government of their country. But if the Boston "patriots" were mere hypocritical traitors in 1776, the country that emerged from the Revolution was a true *patria* to be loved and defended. However, as Washington foresaw, the "pretended patriotism" of the American future would be a justification for foreign entanglements and foreign wars. Thinking primarily of American supporters of France and Britain, Washington might just as well have been speaking about the Madeleine Albrights, Strobe Talbots, and George Bushes who demonize Iraqis, Serbs, and Russians while whitewashing Kurds, Albanians, and Chechens:

> Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real Patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

The Anti-America feared by Washington is now a reality, where Norman Podhoretz, Christopher Hitchens, and Bill Kristol wrap themselves up in a flag they despise and denounce the last American politician who is a patriot without being a scoundrel. Humpty Dumpty's question remains: "Who is to be master?"

—*Humpty Dumpty*

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A Round Table Discussion

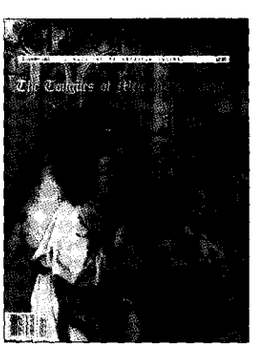
THE EMERGING CHRONICLES MAJORITY

An Emerging Majority?

by Harold O.J. Brown

It is reported that when British General Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington at Yorktown, thus effectively ending the War of Independence, his regimental band played a tune called "The World Turned Upside Down." As we approach the end of the second Christian millennium, one begins to wonder if the band was not just a bit premature.

During the months of March, April, and May, NATO airplanes pounded the small sovereign nation of Yugoslavia for 78 days. NATO officials claimed that it was our moral responsibility to do so. As of this writing, Russian airplanes have been pounding positions within Russia, in the supposedly autonomous Russian republic of Chechnya, which is in rebellion against Moscow, for a mere three days. Germany's Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who energetically supported the bombing of Yugoslavia, told the Russian ambassador that Russia "must stop" its bombing of its rebellious province.



The U.S. Senate passed a law banning partial-birth abortions, which President Clinton then vetoed. An amendment to the bill stated that *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court's ukase permitting abortion at will throughout pregnancy, should not be overturned. The Boy Scouts of America are being (sexually?) harassed because they will not permit homosexuals to be scoutmasters, and also because the Scout Oath makes reference to God. Mail-order houses from all over the

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nation urge us to engage in "holiday giving" (although it must be noted that one of them, L.L. Bean, did put Advent and Christmas—along with Hanukkah and Kwanza—on its calendar of important dates). Two leaders of the religious right, Cal Thomas and Dr. James Dobson, issue a call to repent of over-involvement in politics, while Charles Colson urges, "Once more into the breach!"

The national elections are a year away, but several things seem decided in advance; among the Republicans, the number of available choices has diminished to perhaps three. Among the Democrats, the "pro-choice" party, the "choice" is even more limited. Perhaps by Christmas (or, pardon me, by Winter Holiday) the two major parties will have fused in a bipartisan ecstasy of sensitivity and political correctness.

Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey have published *How Now Shall We Live?*, in order, as good leaders must, to offer hope to their conservative Christian audience. They believe that the surging tides of unbelief, relativism, moral depravity, promiscuity, pornography, and the like can be turned back and our once more or less Christian nation can become such again. This hope depends on two presuppositions: first, that there are enough Americans who still have biblical or Judeo-Christian values at heart to make a difference, and second, that it is possible to rouse those bewildered and benumbed masses to make the necessary decisions and to take the necessary stands.

St. John the Baptist was described in words spoken by the Prophet Isaiah as a "voice crying in the desert" (Mark 1:3), and many *Chronicles* readers as well as writers must have the feeling that that applies to us as well. If so, perhaps it is not at all bad, for while John's own career was cut short by a cruel tyrant, the Man whose coming he proclaimed changed the world. If we cry in the wilderness long enough, loud enough, and persuasively enough, it may just be that those who listen and take heed will turn out to be a majority after all, and not a silent one at that.

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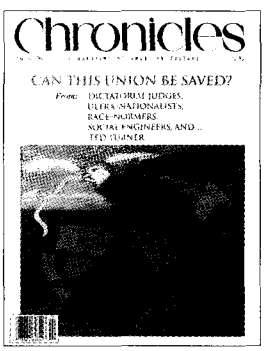
A Bad Lie

by Donald W. Livingston

The great evil of the modern age is the ability of modern states to destroy or suppress independent social authorities and to concentrate power to the center. The horrors of the 20th century—world wars, totalitarian revolutions, mass killings of millions by the state—could not have happened without a concentration of power unprecedented in history. The mother of modern centralization is the Enlightenment ideology of liberalism. The modern state took shape in the 17th century to protect the natural rights of the individual. The enemies of the individual were the moral and political traditions of Europe. But any state powerful enough to destroy substantial moral communities—leaving only a rootless mass of rights-bearing individuals—is also powerful enough to farm those individuals for whatever purpose the ruling class might choose. The French Revolution created the first liberal regime dedicated to the rights of man *and* the first totalitarian regime. Napoleon put the vast state machinery created by French liberalism to the purpose of conquest and his own glory. Hitler did the same with the massive state machinery created by Bismarckian and Weimar liberalism.

Americans worked out the first constitution designed explicitly to decentralize power. By 1800, the world had two models of modern politics: the French unitary state and the decentralized American federation. But, in time, the American polity would follow the French model. This revolutionary change was not brought about by the people openly debating and amending their constitution. It occurred—as it has occurred elsewhere—by fraud and violence.

In politics, tell the big lie, Hitler said. The little lie can be uncovered. The big lie has the power to invert and transform the world itself. The current regime of the United States is grounded in three big lies. The first is Lincoln's declaration that the American states were never sovereign; that the union created the states, not the states the union; and that a state is no more than a county in a unitary state. (Had this been put to the Founders, there would have been no union!) The second lie is the 14th Amendment. This "amendment" was never constitutionally passed by Congress, nor was it constitutionally ratified by the states. The third is the "incorporation doctrine," which says that the 14th Amendment incorporates the Bill of Rights. The inversion is breathtaking. The Bill of Rights, designed to protect the states from the central government, is inverted to protect the ever-expanding rights of the individual—guaranteed by an ever-expanding central government—from the states.



The elimination of state and local sovereignty over constitutionally reserved powers (the regulation of religion, morals, education, voting rights, law enforcement, citizenship, etc.) by the central government has led to social and moral disintegration. The only remedy is to restore the Constitution. There are signs that the big lie is losing its grip. Revisionist historians and philosophic critics of liberalism have been chipping away at the myths that have covered the big lie. These myths are beginning to emit the stale odor of their 19th-century origins—a period in which the West was obsessed with centralization and imperialism. Americans dismayed at the destruction of their cultural inheritance by their own government are, for the first time, disposed to listen to these critiques. The U.S. Taxpayers Party has renamed itself the Constitution Party and is vigorously teaching Americans what their Constitution is. If Americans ever rediscover their Constitution, they will necessarily discover the big lie. And with that—as in the former Soviet Union—some hitherto treasured icons will be justly headed for the dustbin of history.

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Donald W. Livingston is a professor of philosophy at Emory University.

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Blame America First

by Bill Kauffman

"America First," he said, whereupon the skies opened, the thunder cracked, the rains came . . . who knew the empire was so sensitive?

The corporate-media response to Patrick J. Buchanan's *A Republic, Not an Empire*—and when is the last time a presidential candidate wrote his own campaign book?—rivals the Two-Minute Hates directed at Goldstein in Orwell's *1984*. By uttering the forbidden words "America First," Buchanan unleashed a flood of American images and associations—the *Spirit of St. Louis*, Grant Wood's Iowa, Robert Frost, one-room schoolhouses—that have no place in the post-republic Nowheresville of Strobe Talbott and Madeleine Albright.

Isolationists—that is, those Americans who would really rather not bomb, kill, and maim foreigners who have threatened no violence to the continental United States—are in the dock, as they have been in times of hot and cold war since 1917. Writing in 1930, the Jeffersonian poet Edgar Lee Masters marveled that during the Mexican War, "There was great opposition to the war over the country; but at that time an American was permitted to speak out against a war if he chose to do so." Masters had seen, if not completely believed, the furious repression of antiwar dissent during World War I, when Sen. Robert La Follette was almost expelled from the Senate for making (George) Washingtonian utterances. Just as the choleric Masters was reviled for doubting the wisdom of the Civil War some 65 years after "Our American Cousin" was so rudely interrupted, Pat Buchanan has been arraigned for the hate crime of suggesting that, 60 years ago, there were alternatives to the abattoir and its resultant empire.

Better to be in the dock than down the memory hole. For half a century, the question asked across clotheslines and in diners and before beers at the Elks Club—"Why are we over there?"—has gone unvoiced within the corridors of power as well as on the TV screen and in the newspapers. But the 1990's may be remembered as the decade when dissenters found their voice. The gutsy foes of the Gulf War, the Somalia-Haiti-Bosnia intrusions, and the War on Serbia spoke in increasingly American accents; by decade's end, we were seeing the first halting steps toward a left-right coalition against the globalists and centralists—a coalition reminiscent of the brave band that gathered under the America First banner: Main Street Republicans, patrician liberals, farmers, homegrown socialists, East Coast libertarians, radical La Follettes and reactionary Tafts. If Hamilton Fish and Norman Thomas could stand together, why not Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nader? Ron Paul and Jerry Brown? Bob Smith and Russell Feingold?

The reflowering (the courtiers to power call it a recrudescence) of isolationism as an American dream and a ruling-class nightmare is due in significant part to *Chronicles*. America First—a patriotic isolationism that springs from love of country, and in particular that little corner of the country that a man calls home—was thought to be dead and buried. But it lives. Thus the homicides have unsheathed their daggers again. America First must die. I do not mean this metaphorically: The clear intent of the hysterical smears of Pat Buchanan is to inspire some hingeless itinerant to do the empire's dirty work. (He will be a lone nut, of course, who is thoughtful enough to keep a diary with all the right words misspelled.)

Something is happening in American politics. It may be a last gasp, or a forlorn hope. Or perhaps the dead really can rise. Maybe a new party of the people is aborning. For who could have guessed that, as we enter the 21st century, all the king's whores and all the king's hitmen would be taking aim at rumbustious patriots whose banners read "America First"? ‹C

Bill Kauffman's books include America First!: Its History, Culture, and Politics *(Prometheus).*

The Heartland Is Real

by Clyde Wilson

America is an Idea and the First Universal Nation. So say the bedizened oracles and prancing shamans of the American Empire—empire, for what is universal cannot be a nation.

But people don't live on an idea. They live on land—lush or dry, rocky or fertile, according to their fates. If they are lucky, it is land watered by the blood, sweat, and tears of forefathers and foremothers. Those other imperialists, the Romans, made a splendid empire, and lost it when too many of them forgot, or never knew, the *genius loci* and the *lares et penates.*

The one Universal Idea is not liberty or equality or fraternity. The one Universal Idea is Money. But no human being ever lived by Money alone. Remember Scrooge? As my little

Clyde Wilson believes with William Gilmore Simms and the Twelve Agrarians that America is not an Idea but the life of its regions.

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daughter, wise beyond her years, used to say: "Man does not live by bread alone. He must have peanut butter." Human man lives by song and story, custom and ritual, country and community. If you want to see the future of the Universal Nation, look at the cookie-cutter strip malls and nearly cookie-cutter slums of your nearest city. Or watch one of those near-future flicks like *Blade Runner* or *Starship Troopers*. Men and women, young and old, all races and faiths and nations, are equal—and indistinguishable. And all are rich—in gadgets of mass destruction. In contrast to the self-flattering public voices of American Empire, *Chronicles* has been a tireless, eloquent speaker for humanity. Even amidst all the cacophony of the Universal Nation, it has been heard by discerning ears. *Chronicles* has, from the first, known and spoken for the real America. It has not forgotten, as Bill Kauffman and others so movingly remind us, that we wake up every morning in real places, not in the Universal Nation; it has affirmed the reality of a Heartland that officially does not exist except in phony sentimentalized evocations of Utopia (No Place).

Chronicles has even remembered there is a Dixie, officially unknown except as a blemish to be eradicated, but always threatening to break through the stage makeup of the painted harlot of the Universal Nation. And Chilton Williamson, Jr., evokes for us beautifully a West which has set men's minds free with challenges. The West is a kind of idea, but far from a universal one.

Thanks to *Chronicles*, we know we are not alone as ciphers in the Universal Idea, but men and women in America. We know that America began not as the United State but as the States United. We know that our forefathers proclaimed an idea of liberty they hoped would encourage mankind, but that they pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honour to their own lands and liberties. Contrary to the marketing slogans and sophistic declarations of official public discourse, we know that America is not Anybody and Everybody, but many lovely lands for our children and our children's children. c

We Are Right on Foreign Affairs Because We Are Right on Everything

by Srdja Trifkovic

It is almost embarrassing to say that we are right on foreign affairs because we are right on everything else. It nevertheless has to be said, because it is true. We are right on foreign affairs because the behavior of our rulers abroad is a logical and inevitable extension of their behavior at home. Having correctly diagnosed them as a cabal of Gnostic ideologues hell-bent on destroying all real communities in America, on eradicating the remnants of its faith, tradition, and culture in the name of abstract concepts invoked to justify totalitarian control, of course we know what they are up to beyond these shores. They want total control and unlimited power, at home and therefore abroad.

In the seamless straitjacket that is being tailored for us inside the Beltway, there is no real distinction between "foreign" and "domestic" policy. All remnants of self-government at home, and national sovereignty abroad, are to be subjugated to the Supreme Good of "democracy," "universal human rights," and "free trade." The new tyranny relies on quasi-moral language: After the decline of higher cynicism in the name of Progress, we now witness its ascent in the name of Human Rights. Those who deny any substance to this nation—outside the realm of abstract "isms," that is—will naturally seek to undermine and destroy all other real nations, which are but "artificial and temporary social arrangements," according to Strobe Talbott. Spontaneously, organically evolved communities—with their shared memories and ancestors, beliefs and songs—are *verboten* at home; likewise they have to be replaced with some monstrous mini-proposition abroad, such as Dayton-Bosnia.

Domestic proponents of "diversity," who are in fact promoting a deadly monism, will inevitably seek obliteration of the ethnic identity of peoples abroad. Those ready to kill scores of American children at Waco in the name of saving them will not blink an eye at bombing, starving, freezing, and otherwise dispatching untold thousands of others in Belgrade or Baghdad. Those who have replaced the original *res publica* with an imperial presidency at home cannot but seek an empire abroad.

Because we know the cost of the new tyranny at home, we are aware of the price of the empire abroad. The pursuit of global power for its own sake is the denial of America's original principles and a cruel travesty of its authentic political culture. It is also the path of ruin that winds from the Persian King of Kings to Napoleon and Hitler, and America will be just as surely destroyed if its rulers are allowed to carry on like this.

Our diagnosis is right, at home and therefore abroad. The therapy demands radical surgery at home if a durable and secure peace, and relations based on mutual respect rather than fear, are to be effected abroad. Unless the people of this country win it back for the sake of their families, their neighborhoods, their schools, and their eroded liberties, the world will never be safe from America. c

Srdja Trifkovic is Chronicles' *foreign affairs editor.*

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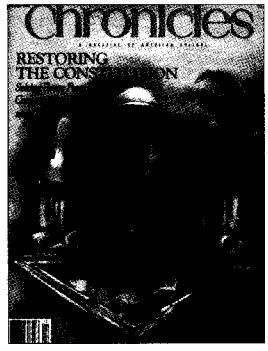
Our Constitution and Theirs

by Stephen B. Presser

We here at *Chronicles* are Constitutional Fundamentalists. We swear allegiance to the Constitution of Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, and not the Constitution of Warren, Brennan, and Souter. We do not believe that the Constitution is a "living document" that must be altered by successive Supreme Court justices to keep pace with the times. The Constitution is an expression of timeless truths about men and their government, and if it was not ordained by divine providence, it was certainly the product of some of the country's greatest political minds. Constitutional change is sometimes necessary, of course, but it should be accomplished through the amendment process specified in Article V, not through the whims of transient majorities of nine Law Lords.

The Framers of the Constitution, understanding that men are fallible, corruptible creatures, set up a structure to balance powers in government against each other, the better to counter tendencies toward self-interest and demagoguery. Thus it is crucial that the president, the Congress, and the courts be limited in their roles. It is the role of the president to conduct foreign policy and to execute the laws passed by Congress, and it is the role of the courts to interpret the Constitution in a manner that objectively reflects the intention of the Framers and the ratifying conventions of the states. It is emphatically *not* the role of the president to make law by executive order, nor is it the role of the courts to reject federal or state legislation because it does not accord with judges' personal notions of public policy.

Under the Constitution, branches of government are set against each other: The president and judges are impeachable and removable by the Congress; the president can veto congressional legislation; and the courts determine the constitutionality of acts of the legislature or executive. The Framers also set up an important second-level check on the inevitable tendencies to abuse and corruption. This was the system of dual sovereignty, whereby the federal government was one of limited and enumerated powers, with the states or the people themselves retaining the rest. The Framers' theory was that the primary governments were to be the state and local ones, and that the federal government should be limited to matters truly national or international in scope. Thus the federal government has no business dictating educational, moral, or even religious policy for the state and local governments, and it is wrong to read the Constitution in a way that permits such usurpations. The Bill of Rights was intended to guard against encroachment by the federal government, and was not to be used as a tool to reject the efforts of local governments.



We believe in the principle of equal justice under the law, and we believe that no American should be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process or of the privileges and immunities of United States citizenship because of race, sex, or ethnic background, and we believe that this was the true intention of the Reconstruction amendments. We believe, however, that the 14th Amendment has been wrongly used by the federal courts to take away from the states those powers which rightfully belong to them.

We believe, with the Framers, that each individual has a spark of divinity within him, but rights cannot be exercised without responsibilities, and the community has a right to self-rule free from arbitrary interference by governmental officials. We believe that to depart from Constitutional Fundamentalism as it has been here defined is to depart from the principle of the Rule of Law, and to substitute for tried and true maxims of government the arbitrary power of the sophister, economist, or calculator. Burke was right, and so are we. c

Stephen B. Presser is the Raoul Berger Professor of Legal History at Northwestern University School of Law and the legal affairs editor for Chronicles.

After the Flood

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

In the nearly 11 years since *Chronicles* took up the issue of virtually uncontrolled immigration to the United States, a great deal of political and social ground—much of it unrecoverable—has been lost. Immigrationists don't claim to have won the debate on immigration reform, because they haven't. Aside from writing op-ed pieces, nasty and dishonest reviews of their opponents' books, and just two full-length works that I can recall in behalf of their own crusade, they haven't even participated in it. Instead, they have chosen to watch cozily from their deck chairs on the beachheads as the foreign tides rolled in while congratulating one another privately on their easy victory. By the time they come to the belated realization that it is a piranhic one, it will be too late for all of us (if it isn't already), and even then they will never acknowledge, not even privately, their catastrophic error.

Chilton Williamson, Jr., is the senior editor for books at Chronicles.

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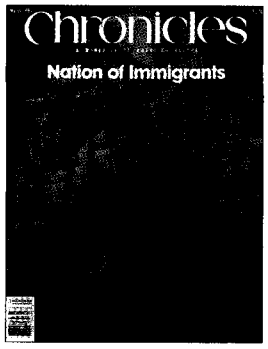
While there is no cause on which the practically monolithic American establishment is as firmly united as it is in its commitment to immigration yesterday, immigration today, and immigration forever, a large number of the crises that currently agitate it—terrorist attacks on American soil, the development of open spaces, air pollution, suburban sprawl, population growth, school crowding, racial tension, illiteracy, the cost of health care, and so on—are substantially the result of its liberal immigration policies from 1965 to the present. If this contradiction were owing to some complicated psychological condition such as cognitive dissonance, resolving it might be as simple a matter as stating the obvious in clear terms, LOUDLY. Unfortunately, the problem is a compound of the simpler and less tractable weaknesses—greed, cowardice, hypocrisy, indifference, disdain for the truth—to which human beings are prone, suggesting that blind nature will have to take its course, as environmentalists and free traders say it ought to, while conferring the luxury of splendid irrationality on the Vice President of the United States (who loves immigrants and trees equally), the Sierra Club (whose Solomonic advice is that native-born Americans should reduce their birthrate to accommodate more foreigners), and the likes of the environmentalist paper *High Country News*, which recently attacked the Border Patrol for tearing up the Sonoran Desert with four-wheel-drive trucks in its zeal to arrest illegal immigrants.



On second thought, it may be the explanation is, after all, psychological rather than moralistic, a matter of madness, not narrow rationalism: instead of cognitive dissonance, a collective death wish, against which there seems from this vantage to be no defense at all short of political revolution (not necessarily the violent sort). Liberalism, which claims to be about love, is really about hate—hatred of reality—and just as love tends to turn outward, toward one's neighbor, hate turns inward, on the self, which is the most vicious and unnatural form of hate. The United States today is the house that liberalism built: not divided against itself but rather united in an official spirit of self-hatred. It cannot stand much longer unless, rediscovering an affection that is not self-love but simply the understanding that charity begins at home, the country as a whole reasserts itself to throw the neurotic, humanly challenged rascals who beset it out. (A major economic depression could get the job done as well.) c

Virtual Education

by Paul Gottfried

Having observed and worked for over 30 years in what is euphemistically called American higher education, it seems to me that what is worst about it is not what it teaches but how it misrepresents itself. Contrary to the impression created by neoconservatives and some misguided traditional humanists, educators (at least the ones I have known) do not corrupt the rising generation by lecturing on postmedieval or postmodernist texts. I would be exhilarated if most of my colleagues read William of Ockham or Martin Heidegger—or belabored their students with the ideas of these putatively subversive figures. I also see no evidence that p.c. lightweights like Cornel West and Andrea Dworkin are being digested (if that is the proper term) in our classes. Professors are too busy enhancing their own evaluations by making the kids feel good about the "college experience."

On the basis of Ockham's "*non sunt multiplicanda entia praeter necessitatem*," it appears foolish to manufacture ideational causes for what is simply crass behavior. In the 60's and 70's, we mass-produced dummies with doctoral degrees, most of whom had taken advantage of "defense loans" or some other federal subsidy. We compounded the error by expanding the number of degree-granting institutions which could provide jobs for the newly certified intelligentsia. A large pool of badly educated high-school graduates, whose parents and the job market wanted them warehoused for four years, made the first two blunders temporarily less catastrophic. As long as there was disposable income (provided by both parents working) and a supply of quasi-sentient bodies, higher education would remain a growth industry.

But the cultural result is burnt-out wannabe intellectuals teaching those whom my parents would have recognized as "definitely not college material." Colleges are becoming theme parks. In return for inflated tuition, adolescents can play at being students—*akoniti*, as the Greeks used to say—without the dust and grime of hard work, or the advantage of genetic predisposition. Parents pay for the admission card, and the reimbursed staff create the "virtual reality" of Joe or Heather College receiving an "awesome learning experience." Like the staff of Disney World, academics and administrators are trained to be nice, i.e. "student friendly," and those intractable sorts who don't go with the program are financially penalized and shunned.

One may be tempted to ask the state to enact solutions. And "conservative" foundations have not been slow to call for political fixes, from government-mandated standards in the humanities and history to the appeal to courts to prosecute college administrations for violating the "First Amendment rights" of dissident professors. There are at least two problems involved in

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pursuing such strategies. One, it is imprudent to put employment situations in even vestigially private institutions under further government control. Those who work for or attend educational enterprises remain employees or consumers. They are not victims of political persecution at the hands of the federal government, which is what the First Amendment was designed to prevent.

Two, the government itself has produced or exacerbated this educational decadence. Whether enforcing "nonhostile work and learning environments" for the beneficiaries of affirmative action or mandating a liturgical celebration for designated victims, Big Brother has his hand deep into academia. It is ludicrous to believe this involvement will become beneficial if "conservatives" insist the state uphold *their* standards. The values and role models being pushed by neoconservative educational critics seem to be almost always variations on left-liberal themes: e.g., exalting Martin Luther King, Jr., in the place of Malcolm X or teaching neoconservative conceptions of global democracy and human rights instead of those of Bill and Hillary Clinton.

It may be best, therefore, to get the government out of universities and colleges as much as we can. The regime encourages ideological grandstanding while doing everything conceivable to politicize learning. Let mediocre schools compete for bodies and the better ones attract good minds! The parents of students and prospective students at Penn, Princeton, and other elite educational institutions have been amply forewarned about what to expect in university classrooms—and, for the most part, do not seem to care. Unfortunately, most Americans are not terribly offended by the transmission of social lunacy as higher learning. Until this changes dramatically, there is no incentive for either the government or educators to clean up their acts.

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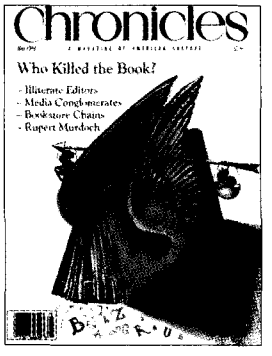
Without Unction

by J.O. Tate

If *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture* is best known for its political, social, and historical reflections, that by no means implies any neglect of literature, nor does it imply that the distinction of *Chronicles* has not been felt in its treatment of literature, or indeed in its presentation of literature itself.

I think that any reader of *Chronicles* knows quite well that this journal has exempted itself from the modes of critical consideration of literature that are dominant today, in parallel with the political, social, and historical obsessions which have rigidified the national discourse into patterns as unwholesome as they are predictable. For years, the *Book Review* of the *New York Times*, for instance, has been assigning books written by "women" to "women" to review. And the gray eminences prefer that blacks review blacks and, now, that homosexuals review homosexuals as well. This is not so much a matter of "gender," race, or "orientation" as it is simply a matter of a left-wing elite agenda which seeks power by politicizing culture, and that by fragmenting expression and even thought itself into a system of quotas. What you think depends on who you are; and who you are is defined by "political" categories identical to those pushed by the federal government, the political parties, and big business. Criticism, more often than not, is out the window. But in *Chronicles*, as I distinctly remember, two figures treated with reverential unction in their environment of New York—Mary Gordon and Harold Brodkey—were summarily dispatched. I forget who did the execution, but I do specifically recall thinking, "What great stuff! And only in *Chronic Icicles*!"

There's a lot more to say about standards and about reviewing, but I want to use my limited space to get to another point altogether, one about the literary consciousness of *Chronicles* itself. This journal is edited by Thomas Fleming, who, among other achievements, is a classicist. His cultivated awareness of the past and of its literature and culture is a signal part of this journal as "a magazine of American culture." The classics and the Bible stand behind this country's history and mind, and behind the editor's mind as well. This is reflected not only in his unique *Perspectives*, but also in the poetry that graces this journal.



What I am getting at is that *Chronicles* not only deals with literature of the past and present; it is itself literature. The essays of Samuel Francis collected serially in *Principalities & Powers* are of great value for what they say, but I think they are of even greater value for how they say it. Some of these have been collected in *Beautiful Losers* (University of Missouri Press), and taken as a whole, the work of Francis bears comparison with that of Hobbes, Hooker, Machiavelli, and Burke, in the sense that it is, in its grammatical poise, syntactical command, and rhetorical power, itself literature rather than political commentary, however substantial it may be.

And finally, a word about "the back of the book." I know I am far from alone in looking forward to the last pages of most issues of *Chronicles*, not because I want my monthly treat to be over, but because these are usually *The Hundredth Meridian* by Chilton Williamson, Jr. In these stories or fables, real life in the West is treated as though it were fiction, and most resonantly so. This ultimate literary touch from a journalist, novelist, and historian is the final proof of *Chronicles*' commitment to, and embodiment of, literature. These poetic and gritty performances, beyond politics and society, set *Chronicles* apart from, and indeed above, any other such journal published in these United States.

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Beyond Conservatism

The Resistance Takes Shape

by Samuel Francis

"Paleoconservatism" is an awkward word, but then what it purports to describe is an awkward thing. The word in the English language that it most resembles is "paleontology"—the scientific study of fossils—and a fossil is precisely what most of the enemies of paleoconservatism accuse it of being. Coined in 1986 or '87, the word was originally supposed to characterize an intellectual and political movement that continued what George Nash called the "conservative intellectual movement" after World War II, and to distinguish it from the newer neoconservatism. As the fissure between neoconservatism and what Paul Gottfried called the "Second Generation" of the "Old Right" widened, however, it soon became evident that the latter was not quite the same thing as the school of writers gathered around *National Review* and its sister institutions in the 1950's and 1960's. Nor were its exponents exactly specimens of the "New Right" of the 1970's and 80's. "Paleoconservatism" eventually developed into a distinctive movement with an identity of its own, quite different from postwar intellectual conservatism, neoconservatism, libertarianism, New Rightism, and other schools of the American right.

There is not much question that paleoconservatism is distinct from most of these other identities of the right, but there remains a good deal of confusion regarding it and the "traditionalist" wing of the postwar "conservative intellectual movement." That is entirely understandable, since paleoconservatism has been deeply influenced by the thought of that generation, especially by James Burnham and Richard Weaver, and in its beginnings was supported by two major adherents of the postwar traditionalist right, the late M.E. Bradford and the late Russell Kirk. But while there remain many beliefs and themes common to both contemporary paleoconservatism and postwar traditionalism, there are important differences as well, and these are not due merely to the emergence of different political and cultural issues today in place of those with which the traditionalists were confronted. Differences in issues—and in enemies—have forced a subtle yet far-reaching metamorphosis of paleoconservatism in some of its basic assumptions and attitudes, to the point that the very word "conservatism," let alone the combining form "paleo," is probably no longer an accurate or useful label.

This fall, when the quadrennial demonization campaign against Patrick J. Buchanan was again cranked up as he discussed his break with the Republican Party and as his new book, *A Republic, Not an Empire*, was published, a host of neoconservatives began saying that Buchanan no longer belonged in the GOP at all or even in the ranks of "movement conservatism." They were largely right, but for the wrong reasons. Buchanan remains far closer to the mainstream conservatism that prevailed from the 1950's through the 1970's than any figure now associated with "movement conservatism," and, as paleos know, it is difficult to find very many fundamental ideas of the contemporary conservative movement with which they are in sympathy. Ironically, Buchanan's expulsion from "Conservatism, Inc.," was due to his very adherence to something close to the more authentic conservatism of the 1950's that the contemporary "right" has abandoned. But his decision to leave the GOP and the "conservative movement" as it currently defines itself was also due to *their* defection from the premises and fundamental ideas that shaped the right with which Buchanan continues to identify. Buchanan's separation from the contemporary movement, whatever its immediate or long-term political

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Samuel Francis is a nationally syndicated columnist and editor of the Samuel Francis Letter, *a monthly newsletter.*

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consequences, is entirely welcome and somewhat overdue, since it now offers an opportunity for him and paleoconservatives generally to purge themselves of a good deal of ideological baggage carried over from the traditionalism of the 1950's, from what Murray Rothbard called the "official" conservative movement as it exists today, and from the Republican Party. It is largely that baggage that has retarded a more complete emergence of an intellectually mature and politically serious movement of the right.

Paleoconservatism remains conservative in the sense that it incorporates the philosophical content of the "classical conservatism" of the 19th century and draws important lessons from the 1950's traditionalists, but the lessons it draws and the uses to which it applies them are rather different. Unlike the 1950's traditionalists, who saw themselves as the defenders of a legitimate postwar political system in resistance to totalitarianism, paleos increasingly reject the legitimacy of the current system of rule in the United States, increasingly perceive the falseness of its claims to be a representative political order, and increasingly anatomize and unmask its political and cultural pretensions—the "two-party system" (which is really one party), the "free-enterprise" economy (which is really a highly regulated and oligopolistic economy fused with the bureaucratic state), the "open society" (which is open to no one but its own defenders and apologists), the "Judeo-Christian tradition" (which is neither Judaic nor Christian), "tolerance" and "diversity" (which are in fact merely licenses for the demonization and even the physical brutalization of white, Christian, heterosexual males and their traditional institutions and values), "global democracy" (which slaughters *en masse* or starves to death entire civilian populations that have never even thought about harming the United States or its citizens), and a dozen other impious frauds built into the regime and its public formulas. Increasingly, paleoconservatives approach these formulas and the structures of power they mask and serve in much the same way that postmodernist critics approach literary texts—as defensive armor that needs to be deconstructed before it can be penetrated and discarded. So far from taking Burke and Metternich as their icons, the paleoconservatives of the 1990's are more likely to adopt Antonio Gramsci as a more reliable guide to understanding and undermining the hegemonic cant of the regime.

Moreover, what the 1950's traditionalists, regarding themselves as a *soi-disant* aristocratic right, sniffed at as "the masses," more populist-oriented paleoconservatives today see as a still-structured middle class that is the only available social base for political resistance from the right. The distrust of the "masses" that 1950's conservatism affected, as Willmoore Kendall and James Burnham came to see, presented an obstacle to any alliance of the right with working-class social conservatives; and long after the hatred for cultural tradition among incumbent elites became obvious, the archaic conservatism of the 1950's continued to posture and moon about the beauties of "aristocracy" and the repellent dirtiness of "populism." Eventually it became simply irrelevant, as issues and threats to the nation, its people, and its civilization arose that conservative traditionalism either failed to recognize or refused to confront.

What paleoconservatives incorporate from classical conservatism is less the latter's preoccupation with legitimating the incumbent system and its aristocratic ideology and rejection of populism than its critique of social-contract doctrine and the cultural and political universalism of the Enlightenment. Paleoconservatives today are perhaps less attracted to Ortega's ominous rumblings about the "revolt of the masses" than to Joseph de Maistre's sardonic dismissal of universalism in his *Considerations on France*: "During my life, I have seen Frenchmen, Italians, Russians, and so on . . . but I must say, as for *man*, I have never come across him anywhere; if he exists, he is completely unknown to me." This dismissal, of course, is the counterpart to the particularity—in nation, region, family, race, ethnicity, and religion—that most paleoconservatives affirm in one way or another.

It is true that many paleos still have not entirely rid themselves of the archaic models, rhetoric, and preconceptions of 1950's traditionalism, but as American society becomes increasingly polarized and destabilized by the existing power structures, the archaism that some versions of paleoconservatism affect will continue to wither and to be replaced by a more radical and more popularly based movement.

As for the separation of paleoconservatism from the contemporary conservative movement, the differences are far more clear than those with its traditionalist mentors of the 1950's. The obvious differences lie in radical disagreements on practical policies—immigration policy, trade policy, and foreign policy most significantly, but also civil-rights issues and the larger issue of federalism and states' rights as opposed to the "Big Government Conservatism" of Jack Kemp, Newt Gingrich, and George W. Bush. Almost all of these differences can be resolved into the conflict between particularism and universalism, with the paleos on the side of the former and the neos and mainstreamers (insofar as there is a difference anymore) allied with universalism. Yet that differentiation implies other, perhaps less obvious, differences as well.

One such difference revolves around the paleoconservative view that liberty and rights are rooted in the cultural, historical, and institutional fabric of a society. Liberty is not a "natural right" in the sense that it exists independently of, or prior to, the social fabric; if the fabric withers and vanishes, liberty will vanish with it. The alternative view common today among "conservatives" (neo or not) is that liberty is a natural right, with universal claims in time and space; those claims ("human rights") are absolute throughout the world and so distinct from particular cultural and historical expression that even Third World im-

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Christmas

by Brian Kirkpatrick

This storyteller knows us well:
the cold and hunger, dust of the road,
the tired, frightened pregnant girl,
eternal warmth and light
obscured by misery.
This is what we need:
to make the sacred bearable
by hiding it in the profane.

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migrants can be expected to display a perfect grasp of, and commitment to, them. The precise content of this absolute, universal liberty always varies, of course, depending upon which college sophomore or Asian immigrant is spouting off about it in the *Weekly Standard* or *National Review* this week, but then the content and meaning of such abstractions always vary precisely because they are mere inventions of the mind rather than anything that really exists. The contemporary conservatives' absolutism and universalism of rights is, of course, the ideological basis for "global democracy," the happy neoconservative embrace of "civil rights," and the political centralization necessary to enforce "civil-rights" statutes and court rulings against states and private institutions. Its heroes are Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., and (to some extent) Thomas Paine—all of them most improbable icons for conservatism.

If the paleoconservatives' affirmation of the rootedness and particularity of liberty is one difference from movement conservatism that is directly related to the conflict between particularism and universalism, so also is the paleos' willingness to entertain the question of legitimacy. In this respect, neoconservatives are perhaps closer to the right of the 1950's than are the paleos, and one of the major and most bitter objections that neoconservatives lodge against paleos (and especially against Buchanan) is that they question the legitimacy of the current system. It was precisely the suggestion of illegitimacy that incited the controversy at *First Things* a couple of years ago, with neoconservatives denouncing such suggestions and anyone who uttered them as "anti-American." For the neoconservatives, it is precisely the universalism they perceive as an integral part of American society that makes the current system the legitimate fulfillment of the American identity, and in their shallow reading of the nation's history, we are the "first universal nation," a "proposition country," where mass egalitarian globo-democracy, mass egalitarian globo-capitalism, and mass egalitarian globo-kulcher define the nation and its way of life. Anyone who challenges this way of life is un-American, probably a McGovernite but possibly a Buchananite, as well as an antisemite, an isolationist, and a xenophobe, if not an outright fascist or Nazi.

In stark and direct contrast, paleoconservatism argues that, while the current system may be legally legitimate, it is definitely not historically legitimate—i.e., it is not an authentic continuation of traditional American or Western identity but rather its revolutionary antithesis and its betrayal (the "great betrayal," as Buchanan called it in his book on trade) precisely because of its incorporation of a universalist ethic and imperative that are the enemies of traditional American institutions, identities, and values. It is this very claim that is the ground of the neoconservative charge that paleos are not really conservatives at all. When William Bennett, the *Weekly Standard*, and *National Review* all say that Pat Buchanan is "no longer a conservative," they are not just talking about his differences with "mainstream conservatives" on trade, foreign policy, and immigration. Those policy differences themselves mainly derive from the perception of Buchanan and other paleos that current trade, immigration, and foreign policies reflect a system at odds with the norms that have pertained throughout most of American history. That is precisely what Buchanan argues in his two recent books—that most presidents in our history, especially Republican ones, have been economic nationalists or protectionists as well as supporters of an "America First" foreign policy of "enlightened nationalism" and that only in recent decades have free trade and globalism prevailed. The neoconservatives sense that Buchanan is declaring a kind of war against the whole political, international, economic, and cultural system—the regime—that has imposed itself in the United States since World War II, and one major reason the attacks on Buchanan are so enraged is precisely that, in his new book, he questions the very legitimacy of World War II itself, a major (if not *the* major) foundation myth of the regime.

To the simpleminded, the criticism that Buchanan and the paleos are not really conservatives because they reject the legitimacy of the current system is compelling, but the criticism confuses "conserving" the regime with a "conservatism" that distinguishes between the current regime, on the one hand, and the historic norms that define the American identity, on the other, and which opposes the former insofar as it threatens the latter. Hence, it would be entirely consistent to say that a figure like Buchanan is a conservative since he seeks to conserve—or even restore—what he takes to be the historic norms and identity of American society, government, and culture, and at the same time that he is not a conservative in his challenges to the dominant system of government, economy, and culture. In other words, he is, like other paleoconservatives, a radical conservative, committed to or influenced by the philosophical content of classical conservatism (at least in its American formulation) and also to the view that the current system does not reflect but in fact threatens the institutional incarnation of that philosophical content. By contrast, movement conservatives and neoconservatives today are neither committed to the philosophical content of classical conservatism (the libertarians have always been quite up-front about this) nor to any opposition to the current system. Indeed, their defense and rationalization of the current system in their political ideology is the only thing that defines them as "conservative" in any sense at all.

The differentiation of paleoconservatism from both its 1950's ancestor and from its increasingly remote cousins among neoconservatives, Republicans, and movement conservatives is part of a process of major intellectual and social-political significance, a process of which Buchanan's departure from the GOP and the angry recriminations visited upon him by many in the party and the "movement" are convenient symbols. Intellectually, it is a reasonably clean and sharp schism between political particularism (defined by Buchanan as "nationalism") and political universalism (defined by the dominant right as "globalism" or "democracy"), and it is the historical roots and legitimization of this particularism—not its allegiance to the current hegemonic system—that make it conservative. Socially and politically, the differentiation is part of the continuing formation of a socially rooted resistance to the hegemonic system in "Middle America" rather than in merely a "conservative intellectual movement" confined to academic seminars and Latinate magazines written and read by Ivy League alumni. Yet the radicalization of the right that Buchanan's break symbolizes and the political success that radicalization could produce can be fulfilled only if a paleoconservative—or rather, what should now be called a radical or revolutionary conservative—vanguard is able to define and articulate it further and more clearly than it has been articulated so far. The opportunity to accomplish that articulation and to institutionalize it finally in a separate and permanent political party and a distinct political and cultural movement is the task to which paleoconservatives should now turn. c

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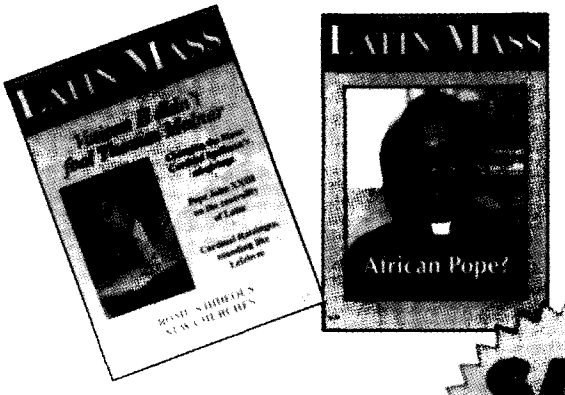

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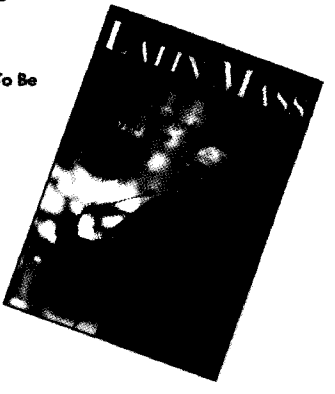

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"All the News Unfit to Print"

Signs of the Times

Vol. 2 No. 1 January 2000

In our fact-free news, concocted and presented by the products of our fact-free educational system, the lies have reached the point where only foreigners dare speak their name. That's certainly true of the most outrageous lie of the year, and perhaps of the decade: the "Kosovo genocide." It did not happen, period.

The cat may not be out of the bag in America, but it is just about everywhere else. As early as September, Spain's foremost daily, *El Pais*, published a report on the findings of the Spanish police and forensic experts who had returned from Kosovo. The very first line of Pablo Ordaz's article was clear: "Crimes of war—yes, Genocide—no":

> This was definitely shown yesterday by the group of Spanish experts formed by officials from the Scientific Police and Civilian Forensics that has just returned from Istok, the Zone in the North of Kosovo under the control of the [Spanish Foreign] Legion. 187 cadavers found and analyzed in 9 villages were buried in individual graves, oriented for the most part toward Mecca out of respect for the religious beliefs of the Albanian Kosovars and without sign of torture. "There were no mass graves. For the most part the Serbs are not as bad as they have been painted," reflected the forensic official Emilio Perez Pujol. That was not the only irony. Also questioned were the successive counts that are being offered by the "allies" on the tragedy of Kosovo. "I have been reading the data from UN," said Perez Pujol, Director of the Forensic Anatomical Institute of Cartagena. "And they began with 44,000 deaths. Then they lowered it to 22,000. And now they're going with 11,000. I look forward to seeing what the final count will really be."

The Spanish mission left Madrid in early August. After preliminary NATO briefings, they departed with the feeling that they were on a road to hell:

> "They told us that we were going to the worst zone of Kosovo and should prepare ourselves to perform more than 2000 autopsies until late November. The result is very different. We only found 187 cadavers and now we are back," explained the chief inspector, Juan Lopez Palafox, responsible for the Office of Anthropology and Scientific Police. The forensic people, as well as the police, applied their experience in Rwanda in order to determine what occurred in Kosovo . . . and they were not able to find evidence of genocide. "In the former Yugoslavia," said Lopez Palafox, "crimes were committed, some no doubt horrible, but they derived from the war."

Closer to home, Richard Gwyn's commentary in the *Toronto Star* (November 3) had a self-explanatory title: "No genocide, no justification for war on Kosovo." Gwyn reminded his readers of repeated U.S./NATO claims that the Serb forces had dumped some of the countless thousands of slaughtered Albanian civilians into the Trepca mine:

> The story was very big for a while: "Trepca—the name will live alongside those of Belsen, Auschwitz and Treblinka," verily chortled the *Daily Mirror* . . . Giving the fib an aura of authenticity the *New York Times* claimed at the time that the residents on the edge of the mine reported an "unusual, pungent bittersweet smell, which they assumed to be burning bodies." The corpses were supposedly thrown down the shafts, or were disposed of entirely in the mine's huge vats of hydrochloric acid.

On October 12, however, Kelly Moore—a spokeswoman for the Hague war crimes tribunal—was compelled to admit that the investigators had found "absolutely nothing" at Trepca. Rather than 1,000 bodies down the mine shafts, there were none at all; and the vats had never been used to dispose of human remains. Shortly afterward, writes Gwyn, the tribunal reported on its work at the most infamous of all the mass graves of ethnic Albanians, at Ljubenic near the town of Pec. NATO officials had claimed that 350 victims had been hastily buried there by the retreating Serbs; five bodies were actually found. As Gwyn points out:

> So far, not one mass grave has been found in Kosovo, despite four months' work by forensic teams, including experts from the FBI and the RCMP. [But on October 31] the *New York Times* was still using the "10,000 deaths" figure.

Gwyn's conclusions are terse and categorical: There was no genocide of ethnic Albanians by Serbs, no "human catastrophe," and no "modern-day Holocaust." There was only:

> a grotesque lie concocted to justify a war that NATO originally assumed would be over in a day or two. . . . No genocide means no justification for a war inflicted by NATO on a sovereign nation.

In a long and detailed article in the *Spectator* of London (October 25), John Laughland declared the "mass graves" of Kosovo a myth. In Britain, at least, there has been some political fallout from the revelations. The defensive posture of the establishment was obvious in the feeble claim by the editorialist of the *Times* of

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London (November 2) that "the actual number of civilians killed to scare the rest off is irrelevant; the prevention of mass murder and ethnic cleansing, on whatever scale, remains a war aim of which Nato can be proud."

This is a desperate claim indeed, and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook knows it. At the time of this writing, he is still evading public pressure to explain how the bombing could be justified by a non-existent "genocide." The *Sunday Times* (October 31) reported that a Balkans committee, composed of members of Parliament from all parties, had asked the Foreign Office to comment on the disparity of numbers:

> At the height of the war western officials spoke of a death toll as high as 100,000. President Clinton said the NATO campaign had prevented "deliberate, systematic efforts at ethnic cleansing and genocide." Geoff Hoon, then a Foreign Office minister and now the defence secretary, later scaled down the estimates. "It appears that about 10,000 people have been killed in more than 100 massacres," he said. The most outspoken challenge to these figures has come from Emilio Perez Pujol, a pathologist who led the Spanish team looking for bodies in the aftermath of the fighting. He said: "I calculate that the final figure of dead in Kosovo will be 2,500 at the most, including lots of strange deaths that can't be blamed on anyone." . . . Alice Mahon, the Labor MP who chairs the Balkans committee, said that the deaths were tragic but did not justify the military action taken by NATO: "When you consider that 1,500 civilians or more were killed during NATO bombing, you have to ask whether the intervention was justified," she said.

Four of those civilians were Chinese, and a detailed investigative article in the *Observer* of London (October 17) reported that NATO deliberately bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade last May, supposedly because the embassy was relaying Yugoslav military radio signals. The report contradicted the public assurances of NATO leaders—taken at face value by all mainstream U.S. media—that the attack had been "accidental." The *Observer*'s sources included "a flight controller operating in Naples, an intelligence officer monitoring Yugoslav radio traffic from Macedonia and a senior [NATO] headquarters officer in Brussels."

The report was picked up by media all over the world. The *Guardian* carried it simultaneously with the *Observer*, and the *Times* of London ran a follow-up article on the official reaction the next day. The *Globe and Mail*, Canada's most prestigious daily, ran the full Reuters account prominently in its international section; so did the *Times* of India, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and the *Irish Times*, to mention but a few. And yet none of America's major TV networks or leading dailies deemed this story worthy of coverage, even though it was carried by AP, Reuters, and other major wires. The *Washington Post* was something of an exception, relegating it to a 90-word summary in its "World Briefing" (October 18), under the agitprop-correct headline, "NATO Denies Story on Embassy Bombing."

Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting, a New York-based group, compared the headlines that several international news agencies attached to their wire stories about the *Observer* exposé: "NATO Bombed Chinese Embassy Deliberately—UK Paper" (Reuters); "NATO Bombed Chinese Embassy Deliberately: Report" (*Agence France Presse*); and "NATO Bombed Chinese Embassy Deliberately, Observer Claims" (*Deutsche Presse-Agentur*) . . . but "NATO Denies Deliberate Embassy Hit" from our own AP. Come back, *Pravda*, all is forgiven.

The *New York Times* has referred to the "accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy" at least 20 times since last May. The last reference was on October 17—the day the *Observer* published its report. Apparently, some news stories are more fit to print than others.

Lest we forget: In July, CIA director George Tenet testified in Congress that, out of the 900 targets struck by NATO during the three-month bombing campaign against the Serbs, only one was developed by the CIA. Yes, it was the Chinese Embassy (AP, July 22).

Regardless of what you think of our "free" media, you are well advised not to share your thoughts on this or any other interesting subject with your friends by telephone or e-mail. According to an in-depth report by Andrew Bomford of BBC Radio 4's *PM* program (November 2), there is a global spying network that can eavesdrop on electronic communications at any time and anywhere on the planet.

> It sounds like science fiction, but it's true. Two of the chief protagonists—Britain and America—officially deny its existence. But the BBC has confirmation from the Australian Government that such a network really does exist and politicians on both sides of the Atlantic are calling for an inquiry. On the North Yorkshire moors above Harrogate around 30 giant golf balls, known as radomes, rise from the US military base at Menwith Hill. Inside is the world's most sophisticated eavesdropping technology, capable of listening-in to satellites high above the earth. The base is linked directly to the headquarters of the US National Security Agency (NSA) at Fort Mead in Maryland, and it is also linked to a series of other listening posts scattered across the world . . .

The power of the network, codenamed Echelon, is astounding. According to the BBC report, every international telephone call, fax, e-mail, or radio transmission can be monitored by powerful computers capable of voice recognition. The computers home in on a long list of keywords, or patterns of messages. While the British and American governments refuse to admit that Echelon even exists, the man who oversees Australia's security services, Inspector General of Intelligence and Security Bill Blick, has confirmed to the BBC that their Defence Signals Directorate (DSD) forms part of the network. The system is so widespread, says Blick, that all sorts of private communications—often of a sensitive commercial or private nature—are monitored and analyzed. In a report commissioned by the European Parliament, investigative journalist Duncan Campbell has concluded that there are "no safeguards, no remedies." His conclusions to the BBC were unequivocal: "There's nowhere you can go to say that they've been snooping on your communications. It's a totally lawless world."

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Buchanan at Bay

"Imperialism is absolutely necessary to a people which desires spiritual as well as economic expansion."

—Benito Mussolini

A Republic, Not an Empire: Reclaiming America's Destiny
by Patrick J. Buchanan
Washington, D.C.: Regnery; 437 pp., $29.95

Finding America's Way

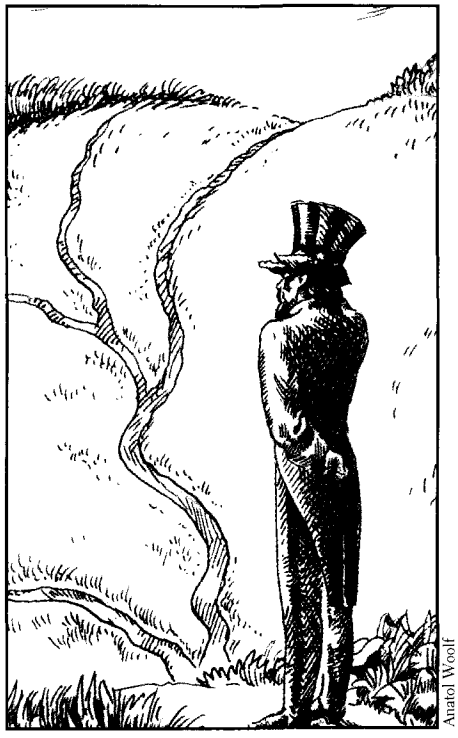
by Justin Raimondo

◆

America has survived, the Last and Only Superpower, while so many others have fallen by the wayside, their bones littering the road from empire: Rome, Spain, Portugal, France, Russia, and—closest to ourselves—a once-great Britain, whose tatterdemalion "Commonwealth" is not even a ghost of her Britannic Majesty's former glory. Are we immune from the decadence that sets in after dreams of empire are realized, or is hubris likely to catch up with us in the coming century? This is the question asked, and answered, in Patrick J. Buchanan's *A Republic, Not an Empire*—a *tour de force* of riveting historical narrative, pyrotechnical polemics, and programmatic clarity that is likely to inspire a whole new generation of conservative noninterventionists.

We have extended guarantees to the Baltic nations, who clamor for NATO membership; the doomed princes of the Gulf, who live in fear of the "Arab street"; the Koreans and the Taiwanese, the Albanians, and the East Timorese—all of which may seem, for the moment, a burden of empire that can be shouldered with relatively little effort. Who, after all, will stand against us? The question may soon be answered, says Buchanan. We feel invincible, *now*—"But so did [Britain when it guaranteed] Belgium's neutrality in 1839," writes Buchanan, a commitment:

> which dragged [it] into the Great War, cost it hundreds of thousands of dead, and inflicted on the empire a wound from which it would never recover. Our country is today traveling the same path that was trod by the British Empire—to the same fate. Do we want America to end that way?



Anatol Wolf

Here is the underlying theme of *A Republic, Not an Empire*, stated at the outset: We can go the way of our British forebears or chart a new course, one that is uniquely American.

Buchanan performs a public service by calling attention to the evil "Wolfowitz Memorandum," a remarkable 46-page document, prepared by Bush's Undersecretary of State Paul Wolfowitz, that envisions the United States as a world empire beyond the dreams of Alexander, dominating the globe and slapping down any who would aspire even to nominal independence. Described in the media as a classified document leaked by anonymous sources, the memo purports to be a foreign policy blueprint for the next century. If so, the 21st will be a century of endless wars, Wolfowitz having targeted Russia as the biggest threat to American interests and projected a U.S.-Russian confrontation over the expansion of NATO—a principle for which America, Wolfowitz believes, must be ready to go to war, and many should be prepared to die. More than that, our troops must inhabit—even dominate—every continent for the protection of our "vital interests" there. The goal of Wolfowitz's vision is to prevent the emergence of any regional power as a possible rival to American world hegemony: All must be reduced to the status of small and militarily impotent states, lest they challenge the imperial dominance of the One and Only Superpower. In short, the

Justin Raimondo writes from San Francisco.

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United States would virtually annex most of the civilized world—and a great deal of that which is not quite civilized—in an act of hubris so reckless, so contrary to the lessons of history and common sense, that it is positively breathtaking to contemplate. That Wolfowitz, the author of this mad memorandum, is now one of George Dubya's top foreign-policy advisors, the theoretician and behind-the-scenes policymaker who could well be the next secretary of state, is—or ought to be—a chilling thought.

Buchanan lays out a frightening and all-too-realistic scenario for five future wars. (His portrait of the "Second Balkan War," which may have been written before the attack on Serbia, reads like a news dispatch hot off the wires. Read as a prediction of things to come, the description of the burgeoning Balkan crisis has the ring of authenticity.) The "Second Korean War" is a reenactment of the earlier conflict, to which nuclear weapons are added; in the "Baltic War," Russia and Belarus overrun Lithuania and demand that the Baltics remain a "weapons free zone." "The U.S. President declares, 'This will not stand,'" avers that "there will be no Munich in the Baltics," and takes us to the brink of nuclear war—in the name of NATO's "credibility." In the Middle East, the "Arab street" explodes, toppling the Saudi princelings and provoking a massive American intervention in Iraq, while the "Second Gulf War" pits the United States and Israel against virtually the entire Arab world in what Buchanan calls "a nightmare scenario." Most interesting is Buchanan's "China-Taiwan War," which has its origins in the shadow of an economic slump that drags the Far East down in a slough of depression. As the People's Liberation Army quells riots in Hong Kong, "Taiwan declares independence in Jefferson's own language and asks the United States and the United Nations for recognition. Both refuse." Taiwan proceeds recklessly to threaten the mainland with nuclear retaliation if Beijing dares even to contemplate an invasion. The Chinese leadership responds by informing the United States and the rest of the world to stay out of the crisis, and blockades the island. The siege of Taiwan is begun. "Should the navy engage Chinese air and naval units in the waters around Taiwan," asks Buchanan, "or stay out of the war?" His answer may surprise many conservatives: Clearly, Pat Buchanan favors a policy of strict nonintervention. As he puts it:

> In none of the wars would any vital U.S. interest be at stake to justify sending a large American army to fight or to risk nuclear war. In each of the wars described above, America is drawn in because of commitments dating to a Cold War that has been over for a decade . . .

As an American nationalist, Buchanan believes that the interests of *this* country deserve a special place—indeed, the *only* place—in the affections of American policymakers. He is, above all, an American patriot, deeply in love with the tradition and spirit of a people uniquely averse, from their love of liberty, to the task of empire-building. Yet any assertion of this brand of Americanism is "shouted down as 'isolationist!'" he complains; "it is time to expose this malevolent myth of 'isolationism,' so that our foreign policy debate can proceed on the grounds of what is best for America." What is best for *America*—not the multinational corporations, or the United Nations, or the peoples of the world, or even the New World Order. Not any of these, but for America First.

One of Buchanan's major achievements in this book is to rescue the memory of the old America First Committee from the slanders of the War Party. Citing a particularly egregious example in the speech of Bush Senior on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor—"Isolationists flew escort," said Bush, "for the very bombers that attacked our men"—Buchanan avers that "President Bush had stood history on its head." Uttered at the height of Buchanan's assault on the Bush establishment, this lying canard no doubt enraged Buchanan at the time, and much of the rest of *A Republic, Not an Empire* is a refutation of this particularly Big Lie.

The "isolationism" of the Founders, Buchanan asserts, is a myth—a useful one for the War Party, but a myth nonetheless. He proceeds to make his point in the next few chapters as he describes the expansion of the United States from a struggling confederation clinging to the Eastern shore to a continental republic on the brink of empire. Buchanan's account is enthralling, full of historical detail and odd fact. The fateful turn toward empire began with the acquisition of the Philippines and Puerto Rico and the "liberation" of Cuba, Buchanan argues, dramatizing the temper of the times with such fascinating doggerel as the *Boston Transcript*'s ode to Commodore George Dewey, the conqueror of Manila:

> O Dewey at Manila
> That fateful first of May,
> When you sank the Spanish
> squadron
> In almost bloodless fray,
> And gave your name to deathless
> fame;
> O glorious Dewey, say,
> Why didn't you weigh anchor
> And softly sail away?

Americans exulted in the taking of the Philippines, but, as Buchanan shows, it was a fateful decision. Indefensible against the rising peoples of the East, who were nation-building in spite of Western interference, the Philippines, rather than becoming the forward position of an expanding American power in the Orient, became our Achilles' heel—as the events in the Pacific during World War II would demonstrate.

The bacillus of imperialism, as one critic of the Spanish-American War put it, had infected the American body politic, lodging itself most importantly in the consciousness of the financial and intellectual elites. We had become a mirror image of the Mother Country, against whose depredations we had rebelled—and were now inflicting similar depredations on the conquered peoples of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean isles. No longer our nemesis, Great Britain had become "our exemplar."

The Anglicization of American foreign policy was completed on a grand scale as the tragedy of World War I unfolded. Buchanan asks: "Why did Woodrow Wilson break with all tradition and lead America into a slaughterhouse that had consumed millions of the best and bravest of Europe's young, when no vital interest was at risk?" Buchanan points to the Anglophilia rampant among the nation's elites, citing historian Ralph Raico:

> The President and most of his chief subordinates were dyed-in-the-wool Anglophiles. Love of England and all things English was an intrinsic part of their sense of identity. With England threatened, even the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Edward D. White,

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voiced the impulse to leave for Canada to volunteer for the British armed forces.

While the British propaganda effort in America was massive and effective, it was not just Perfidious Albion that dragged us into a war that marked the beginning of a new barbarism. There was also, Buchanan points out, the all-pervasive influence of the Money Power. The munitions industry, growing fat on the profits of war, was a mighty lobby for intervention, while the New York banks were concerned for the debts owed them by the Allied powers. Without an Allied victory, those loans would never be repaid: The economic future of the nation had been mortgaged and tied to the victory of England and France. Wilson campaigned on the slogan, "He kept us out of war!" Not long after he took the oath of office, the new President—the sanctimonious "man of peace"—took us into the war, and planted the seeds of the next one.

Buchanan's account of the events leading up to World War II has provoked a storm of controversy which—much to the chagrin of his enemies—catapulted his book onto the best-seller lists. In Buchanan's view, this mistaken war gave rise to the Soviet Empire and precipitated an unnecessary life-and-death struggle lasting half a century. Hitler was intent on going east, avoiding war with the Western powers and especially the United States. England was out of danger after the Battle of Britain, and the Germans' failure to cross the Channel signaled that the British were beyond the power of the Nazi armies. Having secured his Western front, Hitler then moved east: His invasion of the Soviet Union would almost certainly have resulted in the two totalitarian powers destroying one another. But it was not to be. The American left, including the Communist Party and its many liberal allies, was determined to save the Soviet Union. As soon as the socialist fatherland was attacked, they went into action, while, on the other side of the barricades, the conservatives and their libertarian brethren began organizing the America First Committee.

Buchanan's recounting of the story of the Committee covers much of the ground first turned by such historians as Wayne S. Cole and Justus Doenecke, while popularizing and dramatizing the trenchant point made by these pioneering scholars: that the AFC, far from being "a Nazi transmission belt" as its leftist and communist opponents insisted, was the beginning of a movement to take back the old American republic, a rooted American mass-based antiwar program embodying the traditional American aversion to the turmoils and intrigues of Europe. Eight hundred thousand strong, the AFC developed a sophisticated analysis of the world situation that reflected the instincts of the ordinary American, who (in June 1940) opposed the United States' entry into the war under any circumstances in overwhelming numbers (86 percent). Only five percent wanted us to fight: this, as Buchanan points out, at the nadir of the Allies' fortunes.

"I will not take us into any European war," was FDR's solemn declaration—in retrospect, an outright lie. If we submit this statement to the rigors of Clintonian exactitude, however, we discover that Roosevelt was not lying: He did not take us into a European war directly but rather by the back door, in the Pacific. The President's war message to Congress in the wake of Pearl Harbor failed even to mention the Germans. Hitler declared war on us a few days later, a blunder that Buchanan understandably calls "monumental." Yet he does not relate the whole story, if he knows it, which is that Hitler's declaration of war was a reaction to the fake news of a supposed "Victory Plan," planted in the media—ironically enough, in the antiwar *Chicago Tribune*—by British intelligence and describing American plans for an expeditionary force of millions to aid the Allied war effort in Europe. Hitler cited this report in *his* war message—and so it turns out that the German Führer and the American people alike fell for this ruse, with disastrous consequences for both. (The British also concocted the famous map, cited by Buchanan, in which the Nazis' "master plan for the Americas" showed the Western Hemisphere divided into five "vassal states.") Still, the War Party's best efforts were failing, as Buchanan points out: "By the fall of 1941, the two great combatants were Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. Most Americans did not believe their husbands, fathers, or sons should die for either one."

Buchanan's riveting account of the long series of provocations, diplomatic blunders, and wrongheaded policies that set us on the road to Pearl Harbor can only be summarized here. The roots of the conflict were in the Philippines and the proclamation (and failure) of the overarching policy of the Open Door in China: Both, says Buchanan, led directly to the events culminating in the war with Japan. The catalyst, however, was the economic embargo declared by FDR after the Japanese seizure of French, British, and Dutch colonies in Indochina and the outlying islands. As Buchanan puts it, Japan, "gripped by the throat," had the choice either to fight or to perish. It chose to fight, and the rest is history—but history as written by the victors, a self-serving chronicle of self-justification and self-glorification, composed by "court historians" (in the phrase of the revisionist historian Harry Elmer Barnes) to honor the vanity of statesmen and whitewash their crimes.

Against the court historians, Buchanan has raised an alternative view of American history that throws down the gauntlet to the War Party. Particularly interesting is his account of the repressive campaign directed by FDR against the antiwar movement of the early 1940's, which in hindsight seems very much like that waged by President Richard Nixon on the antiwar movement of the 1960's.

I will not tarry over my disagreement with Buchanan's thesis that the waging of the Cold War had an effect on the ultimate fate of the Soviet Union and its satellites, other than to prolong their existence. His interpretation of the Vietnam War, and his view that we could have "won" it, is belied by his own analysis concluding that we should never have become involved in Southeast Asia. He veers close to the revisionist view, however, when he remarks that, in Vietnam, "the New Frontiersmen were pursuing Wilsonism—with guns." He gives a *very* abbreviated account (in three paragraphs) of how Ronald Reagan supposedly won the Cold War, while saying nothing about the economic impossibility of socialism; but then, economics is not Buchanan's strong suit. Aside from his few allusions to trade protectionism—a policy with which I thoroughly disagree, but which is easily separable from his foreign-policy stance—this book is a near-perfect summary of the most important issue of our time: the vital question of war and peace. There are not many visions of what a pro-American, noninterventionist foreign policy would be like, or why it is preferable to the crusading globalism of our bloody-minded rulers. *A Republic, Not an Empire* is one of them. c

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The Two Faces of American Isolationism

by John Lukacs

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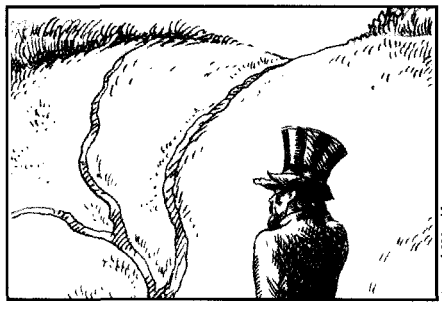
A Republic, Not an Empire: Reclaiming America's Destiny is a pamphlet *and* a history. Some of the greatest compositions of the human mind were cast in the form of pamphlets, even when they were thrown at a public for immediate political purposes. There is nothing very wrong with Buchanan's pamphlet, which consists of two of the seven chapters of his book, framing the other five. They clang with the repeated sound of his hard-hammered points, sometimes imaginative but not unrealistic: indeed, worth thinking about. He is concerned with the—yes, often thoughtless—practices of international globalism, of excessive immigration, of American military and political commitments all around the globe, of insufficient concern with what the Russians think about their own security. He proposes (among other matters) that the principal task, and duty, of the army of the Republic is to defend its frontiers, especially on the Mexican border; that Puerto Rico should be allowed to become independent; that in the event of the dissolution of the Canadian state some of its provinces should be admitted to the United States; that the expansion of NATO is senseless, dangerous, and wrong. (In his previous book, he urged the merits of American industrial, though not agricultural, protectionism.) Every one of these propositions is worth considering. This book lauds the virtues of American isolationism—which is where the trouble comes in a volume that attempts nothing less than a history of American foreign policy over more than 200 years.

There is nothing very wrong with isolationism, so long as it is attuned to normal human aspirations to safety, privacy, integrity, and self-confidence. The trouble is with isolationists: a word that, according to H.L. Mencken and Patrick Buchanan, is merely a term of invective. But there is more to the matter than that. Isolationists, like pacifists (and Buchanan is anything but the latter—indeed, he is very much a militarist), exist only in the abstract. Scratch an isolationist, and you will find an internationalist underneath. (The opposite is also true.) There are few pacifists, if any, who will not defend anyone or anything dear to them; there are few isolationists who are wholly uninterested in the relationship of their country to the rest of the world. Buchanan is not one of those few, being fiercely interested in the record of American foreign policy.

Of course no one can see the present independent from his view of the past, about which he may be mistaken. But what matters is the quality, even more than the quantity, of the mistakes in question—their purpose as well as their number. And Buchanan's mistakes are not just the expectable flaws (there are a few of those) of a nonprofessional historian. Their elements lie deeper.



Anatol Woolf

The main trouble with almost all American isolationists in the 20th century has been their inconsistency—or call it selective patriotism, or special pleading. Many of those who were opposed to a war against Hitler's Germany very soon after it concluded became enthusiasts of an American crusade against Soviet Russia. This is not the place to compare the evils of Hitler with those of Stalin, or Nazism with communism—though it must be recognized that, for a long time, American ideological anticommunism was a primary force in both foreign and domestic politics, the cement that held the Republican party together for more than 45 years, eventually propelling their presidents into power: *the* nationalist party. (But no longer—which is Buchanan's present political problem.) During World War II, there were but two alternatives: Either all of Europe would be dominated by Hitler's Germany, or Western Europe would be liberated through Britain's alliance with America, with the possibility of Eastern Europe falling (partially and temporarily) into a Russian sphere of interest—and half of Europe was better than none. That was Winston Churchill's perspective, from the very first hours of the war until its end. But in 1940 and '41, well even before Hitler's invasion propelled an unwilling Stalin into the conflict, America's isolationists were loud and clear against America standing by Britain. These isolationists are the heroes of Patrick J. Buchanan. And his arch-villain is Churchill.

Buchanan hates Churchill even more than he hates Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt (whom, of course, he does not spare). Churchill was a cynic and a liar—unlike Ronald Reagan, "an almost perfect blend of realism and idealism." "By 1945 Germany had been destroyed and Churchill could poke about its ruins." Buchanan says that in 1939 the British and the French should not have stood up for Polish independence. But when, in 1945, Churchill "sold out Poland to Stalin," it was worth a Cold War—if not, indeed, more than that. Buchanan is convinced that it was wrong, and probably even criminal, for the United States to have fought the Third Reich. His pages glow with the inner fire of his belief: with his contempt for Britain and his allowance for Germany's plans for Eastern Europe in 1939. He writes that Hitler should have been allowed to invade Russia in 1939 (trampling Poland down on the way?), and that the Western democracies could afterward have made peace with him—and we would have been living in a better world. That is of course questionable—to say the least. But this is one of Buchanan's deepest beliefs.

In sum, Buchanan is as much of an internationalist as he is an isolationist—dependent on his choice of who the enemy is. And the same Buchanan who in this book attacks (not without reason) the ham-handed American intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo, in 1991 proposed that the Sixth Fleet enter the Adriatic to assist Croatia (a creation and ally of the Third Reich 50 years before that).

There *is* something to be said for nationalists and also for isolationists—at certain places and in certain times. But their cause must not be determined by one, and only one, element: by the selection—as visceral as it is mental—of their preferred enemy. There are estimably conservative elements in Buchanan's advocacy regarding the future of the United States, about its situation in the world. But in his vision of his country's past, he is neither an isolationist nor a conservative but a nationalist radical. c

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John Lukacs is the author of A Thread of Years *and of* Five Days in London *(both from Yale University Press).*

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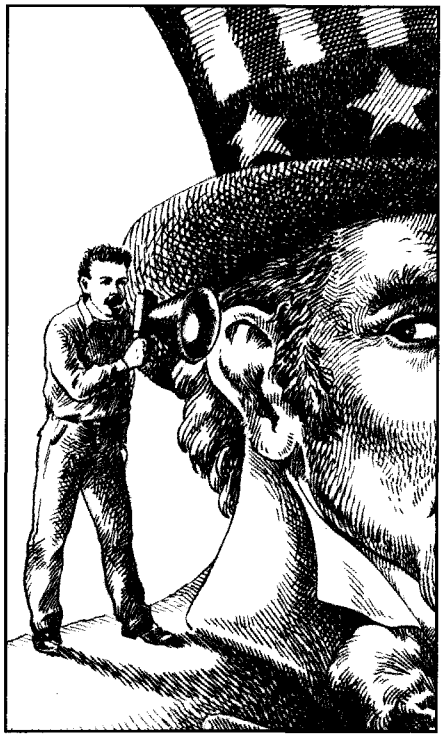
Woolly Conservatism

by William Murchison

"A Conservative is only a Tory who is ashamed of himself."
—J. Hookham Frère

The Paleoconservatives:
New Voices of the Old Right
Edited by Joseph Scotchie
New Brunswick, NJ:
Transaction Publishers;
212 pp., $29.95



Anatol Wooll

Plans to shuck the Tory Party's sacred name rattled the young Disraeli, who remarked that the replacement name, Conservative, sounded to him like "the invention of some pastry chef." Similarly, paleoconservatism conjures up the image—in my mind, anyway—of weight-lifter types in animal skins, flinging spears at woolly mammoths: Victor Mature meets Murray Rothbard. The paleoconservative movement might be advised one of these days to scratch around for a more compelling name than the one meant originally to distinguish its adherents from the neocons.

This is assuming such a movement actually means to move, and that it has a particular direction in mind. The impression that comes across from Joseph Scotchie's collection of essays by paleocon thinkers is of a formidable—mammoth would not be so bad a word—beast inclined to the stationary position, an animal whose brainpower merits more respect than its legs or trunk.

What I see in these essays (five of which appeared originally in *Chronicles*), in other words, is intelligent, pointed dissent from things as they are in a United States forgetful of its glorious heritage, more truly wedded to gold than God. What I do not see, at the same time, is a plan for doing much to rectify the situation.

Let that go. Anybody can draw up battle plans: Witness the army of political tacticians who fatten their stock portfolios at the expense of the major parties; adroit at showing how to carry states and precincts, clueless when it comes to defining what kind of country this should be.

The great, the consuming, virtue of *The Paleoconservatives* is the meticulous attention its contributors pay to how we should live and what we should believe: what ideas we should—gulp—offer to die for. Not a few of these essays are exhilarating. All are challenging. Bravo, Scotchie, I would say. Bravo, the well-placed, literate concern for intelligence and dignity and honor and freedom.

I hope my spear-flinging brethren will not turn on me if I suggest that the paleoconservative *critique* is more important than the paleoconservative *program*—to the extent anyone would adduce the existence of a program. I do not think, just for instance, that the United States is going to accept Frank Chodorov's reprinted counsel that taxation is robbery. Chodorov, to know the true meaning of robbery, thou shouldst be living at this hour! In a hundred Texas school districts, the state takes locally raised tax monies and distributes them to districts of lesser "property wealth." Yet, with the whole American political system resting on government's power to act in just such ways, the tax system is not going to be reformed. A reform as innocent as the flat tax has virtually no chance of enactment.

Still, Chodorov's critique of taxation, with its echoes of old Bastiat, makes the gray cells dance. An America free to contemplate the possibility that government plunders us cannot be a lost cause.

So with Chilton Williamson, Jr.'s astute comments on multiculturalism and immigration ("Promises to Keep"), wherein it is brashly asserted that "there no longer *is* a United States in any save the legalistic sense." The people spigot, opened wide during Lyndon Johnson's regime, is not going to be turned off any time soon. I said "soon." We live in the most migratory moment since Rome fell. (A mitigating point: Some of these new fold—I speak from experience—are fine

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William Murchison is a nationally syndicated columnist for the Dallas Morning News.

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people.) Our society has yet to appraise the consequences of such immigration as we are experiencing. How to appraise those consequences and, one of these days, act on them? Be reading, among others, Chilton Williamson.

"Frodo Lives," we used to read on restroom and alley walls. Hell, common sense lives: tough-minded, stiff-necked common sense, the kind that says, I don't care what they tell you on NPR, *this* is how things really are. To this mission the paleocons, bless 'em, with all their quirks and quibbles, have set their hand. One of their most lovable traits is that they speak the truth. That shows you, right off, the prospects they enjoy as a movement.

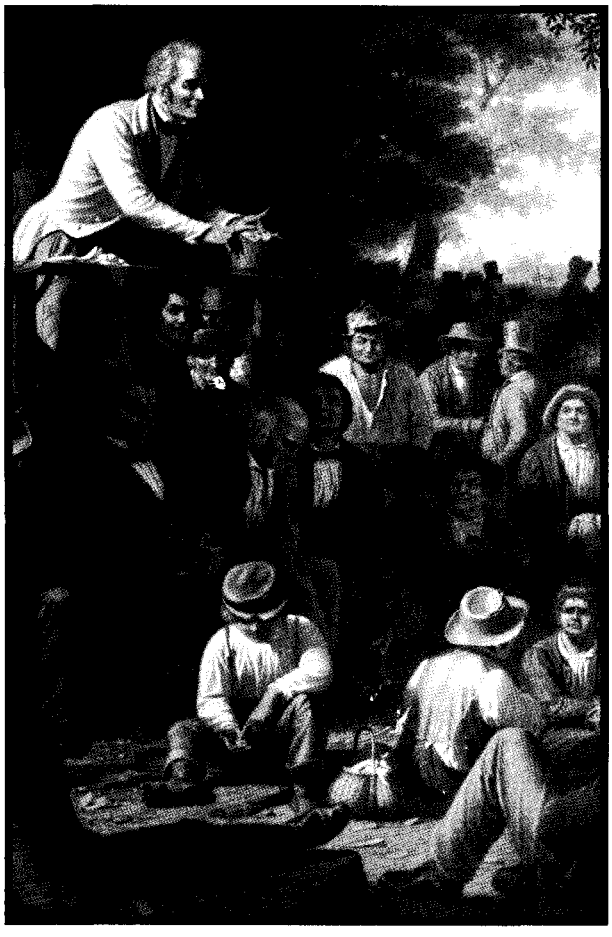
Yes, Clyde Wilson ("Restoring the Republic") cries out for "a return of power to the many," "a renewal, a true return to roots," the substitution of "liberty for equality as our chief goal." Yes, Samuel Francis ("Nationalism Old and New") argues for "a long counter-march through the institutions of the dominant elite" and recreation of "an ethic of solidarity and sacrifice." Considering how long the "progressives" have been running things, manifestos like these partake of whistling past the graveyard. But it is melodious whistling, a joy to the ear. Substitute liberty for equality? It is not going to happen, ever. Unless you talk about it. The talk here is what matters.

And the spankings. Archly, and with appropriate satisfaction, the editor of *Chronicles*, Thomas Fleming, administers the board of education to the seat of naiveté—the common presumption, among well-intentioned religious folk, that it is more important to keep bad books out of libraries than to introduce good books to those same institutions. Aiming another telling blow, Fleming asserts that laity and preachers "are too busy with stewardship, financial planning, and bingo."

So there is an action program for you after all: Make good books more available. Another program exists: homeschooling. Homeschooler Allan Carlson's essay on the topic is invigorating. What delights me about homeschooling—speaking from an outside perspective—is that the government, as much as it hates to see you doing it, cannot make you stop.

No book of principled protest would be complete without Russell Kirk and M.E. Bradford. Both appear here to advantage. Kirk's paean to tradition is, if possible, more appealing now than when first printed in 1989, and Bradford is as enlightening as you would expect him to be on why the American experience is conservative.

I do not agree (hold those spears, folks) with everything written and asserted in *The Paleoconservatives*. Who could? Paleoconservatism is less a philosophy than a vital instinct—emphasis on "vital." The truths, the manners, and mores that lived among us in the beginning could live again. Some water is all it would take, and a lot of love.



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Is there anything *Chronicles* editors can't speak on?
(Okay, we're still looking for a physicist.)

For a complete list of speakers and topics, contact Aaron Wolf at (815) 964-5811

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In Defense of Gravity

by Thomas E. Woods, Jr.

The Roosevelt Myth
by John T. Flynn
San Francisco: Fox & Wilkes;
437 pp., $14.95

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John T. Flynn had the distinction of being singled out by Franklin D. Roosevelt as a writer who "should be barred hereafter from the columns of any presentable daily paper, monthly magazine, or national quarterly." Until the New Deal came along, however, Flynn had never been known as a conservative. During the 1920's, he served as a financial analyst for the *New York Globe*, and the following decade wrote a popular series of muckraking books and articles while beginning a regular column with the *New Republic*.

It was FDR's political program that got him thinking. The court-packing scheme, the increasing concentration of power in the hands of the President, and an economic regime bordering on fascism—all this was too much for Flynn, and he would go on to become one of the most dogged of the President's opponents. *The Roosevelt Myth*, when it was first published in 1948, hit number two on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Now, a 50th anniversary edition, with a new (and excellent) introduction by historian Ralph Raico, brings this scathing and relentless indictment to a country whose leaders, of whatever political stripe, almost to a man treat FDR with a reverence that more civilized men reserve for things divine.

Flynn, although possessing a reasonable grasp of market economics, never fully managed to shed his progressive past. "Flynn was not a strict libertarian," Raico notes in his introduction, "nor was his thinking on economics notably sophisticated." But no strictly economic analysis of the Roosevelt years can match the color, verve, and compelling idiosyncrasy of Flynn's pen or substitute for his seemingly inexhaustible supply of anecdotal material about Roosevelt and the men who surrounded him.

In any case, it takes little specialized training to reach, as Flynn did, the central point that FDR, for all his tinkering and legislative innovation, utterly failed to correct the Depression. Flynn's admiration for Herbert Hoover may have been misplaced, but it was based on his perception that Hoover, unlike Roosevelt, saw business recovery—not puerile scapegoating of "economic royalists"—as the key to lifting the nation out of its unprecedented slump. Roosevelt himself said that he had never read a book on economics; as Flynn put it, "it is entirely possible that no one knew less about [it] than Roosevelt." Ignorance was indeed bliss for FDR, who seems to have held that no economic law was a match for his iron will. (Thus H.L. Mencken's "Constitution for the New Deal," which appeared in the June 1937 issue of the *American Mercury*, gave the President the power to "repeal or amend, in his discretion, any so-called natural law, including Gresham's law, the law of diminishing returns, and the law of gravitation.")

At no time during the 1930's did the percentage of Americans unemployed drop below double digits. From 1933-1940, unemployment averaged a whopping 18 percent. FDR's best year was 1937, when the rate dropped temporarily to 14.3 percent, but by the end of the year the economy was nearly as bad as it had been when he entered office. By the time of America's entry into World War II, unemployment was still at 18 percent—the same rate that obtained during Roosevelt's first year as President! If the war relieved unemployment and restored "prosperity," it did so in ways that were hardly ideal: Production, while high, was diverted from consumer needs into war materiel, and the 12 million men conscripted into military service, while no longer showing up as "unemployed" in national statistics, can hardly be said to have experienced an economic (or any other) turn for the better.

Like his predecessor, FDR and his advisors believed that falling prices, like falling wages, were a principal cause of the Depression rather than a symptom of it. The natural remedy, therefore, was to increase prices by any means necessary. Hence the logic of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which paid farmers to destroy enormous quantities of crops and livestock and to take countless thousands of acres out of production entirely. Flynn's description of Henry Wallace is a good example both of the author's prose style and of his skill as a chronicler and critic of the inanities of the FDR years:

> Henry Wallace, as mild-mannered a man and mystic as ever knelt on a prayer rug or slit a pig's throat or burned a field of corn, became Secretary of Agriculture and came up with a plan that was supposed to be more effective and more orderly than cinch bugs, boll weevils or dusts storms in providing our people with the scarcity that everybody needed.

While this program was under way, the Department of Agriculture released a study regarding the American diet during these lean years. The Department constructed four sample diets: liberal, moderate, minimum, and emergency (below subsistence). Its figures were sobering: America was not producing enough food to sustain its population at the minimum (subsistence) diet. "How to better this may be a problem," Flynn observed, "but the last course a government run by sane men would adopt to get it solved would be to destroy a good part of what we do produce."

Flynn is equally withering on Roosevelt's conduct of foreign affairs. As a diplomat, the President was at best incompetent, and as commander-in-chief he was an outright liar. That FDR at the very least deceived the American public repeatedly on matters of grave national concern, especially regarding his intentions for the United States in World War II, can no longer seriously be denied; and indeed the best the intelligentsia have been able to do is to echo the bland, patrician assurances of William F. Buckley, Jr., that, after all, the President was lying to us for our own good. To which argument Flynn replies: "[I]f Roosevelt had the right to do this, to whom is the right denied? At what point are we to cease to demand that our leaders deal honestly and truthfully with us?"

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Then there is the matter of FDR's almost criminal naiveté regarding Joseph Stalin. Roosevelt exerted his influence throughout the normal channels of civil society, from the movies to the press, to promote a wholly fictional and laughably propagandistic view of the great Russian nationalist. (It was only the uncouth, you understand, who persisted in regarding Stalin as a communist.) "[U]nder the influence of the propaganda he had promoted," Flynn adds, "and reinforced by his own eagerness to please Stalin, no one in the country was more thoroughly deceived by it than Roosevelt himself." What it all added up to, ultimately, was that the U.S. government "put into Stalin's hands the means of seizing a great slab of the continent of Europe, then stood aside while he took it and finally acquiesced in his conquests."

Franklin D. Roosevelt was, after Lincoln, the consummate Great President and the chief architect of the present regime, so it should not be surprising that, despite his thorough debunking at the hands of Flynn, FDR should continue to elicit the adulation of professional historians and the ruling elite. As Raico puts it, "It seems that there is no degrading inanity, no catastrophic blunder that is not permitted a truly 'great president.'"

Thomas E. Woods, Jr., is an adjunct scholar of the Ludwig von Mises Institute and a professor of history at Suffolk Community College on Long Island.

Of Rights and Rabbits

by Thomas Fleming

The House of Atreus: Abortion as a Human Rights Issue
by James F. Bohan
Westport, CT: Greenwood Press; 256 pp., $39.95

◆

James Bohan, a Pennsylvania attorney, believes he has elevated the abortion debate above the pedestrian levels of both medicine and religion. However, Mr. Bohan rises above faith and science only to fall back on the well-worn clichés of human rights doctrines found in the sacred texts of the Declaration of Independence, the writings of Albert Schweitzer, and the various declarations on human rights issued by international agencies. To finish off the argument with a literary veneer, he invokes "Aeschylus's House of Atreus" as an historical-mythical model of a society addicted to irrational killing.

Along the way, the author manages to lose himself in the usual maze of illogic and bad history that has characterized both sides of the abortion debate. He cannot apparently conceive of an unborn child as a human being without according it full legal personhood. He must think that, in societies where women and children are not legal persons, it is open season on wives and minor sons. Because he cannot understand citizenship, apart from the theory of rights, he falls into the usual trap of equating *Roe* v. *Wade* with *Dred Scott*. Worst of all, he thinks that he can provide a non-religious ethical basis for respecting innocent life, when it is perfectly obvious that even the greatest pre-Christian civilizations allowed infanticide.

It is a familiar trap, which even explicitly Christian defenders of life fall into. Although they may have embraced the faith in their heart, their minds belong to the secular anti-Christian world of the Enlightenment. Intellectually, they are adherents to the religion of human rights: a religion without a particle of historical, natural, or logical foundation. It may be a stretch to ask people to worship the historical Jesus as "very God of very God," but what can we say of people who venerate unexamined abstractions, like "All men are created equal"? It is better to carry a rabbit's foot: Rabbits, at least, are real creatures, but no one has ever seen a right, much less eaten it or cut off its foot. Hares and rabbits are attested all over the world; rights are the peculiar manufacture of liberal intellectuals in modern Europe.

Bohan's scholarship is on par with his theology. Even lawyers can be expected to know that Aeschylus did not write "The House of Atreus" but the *Oresteia*. If he had taken the trouble to read and digest Aeschylus's masterpiece, he might have realized how wrongheaded he was, both about the ancient myth and about his muddleheaded defense of unborn life. It is very dangerous to equate the killing of Clytaemnestra—a woman who needed killing if anyone ever did—with the death of unborn children, and even Atreus—who killed Thyestes' children and served them up to their father at a banquet—had a rational motive: revenge against a brother who had seduced his wife and tried to steal his throne. What comparable defense can be made by a woman who kills her own child, simply because it is inconvenient? But, then, who in his right mind would equate slavery with murder?

Why be so hard on the poor fellow? He meant well, after all, and worse books are published every month, not only on abortion but on marriage, religious freedom, and "family values." That is the point. With very few exceptions, conservative and Christian books, however well intentioned their authors, are almost entirely without merit. Poorly written, badly argued, unresearched, they succeed only in convincing serious-minded people, both on the left and in the center, that the right has no case to make. Worst of all, in reformulating Christian arguments in the anti-Christian language of human rights, they continue to undermine the rational and historic basis of Christian thought and European civilization.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles.

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Letter From South Carolina

by Clyde Wilson

The State That Didn't Forget

◆

The Confederate battle flag still flies every day over the capitol building of South Carolina. Readers may remember that I have several times reported in these pages on the attempts to remove this lonely anti-imperial symbol from public view. One discussion a few years ago even elicited a complaint to *Chronicles* from then-Governor David Beasley. Mr. Beasley, alas, is no longer governor, having to console himself with a part-time position at a Harvard think tank. Having promised not to mess with our flag, he turned around and mobilized the entire Republican establishment to take it down in order to catapult himself into the national limelight, claiming to have received instructions from the Almighty. He thus did the only thing that a Republican could do to ensure that he wouldn't be reelected. A fourth of the Republican voters defected and elected a lackluster Democrat who also promised not to mess with our flag. His sincerity, of course, is already in question. (I sadly must tell folks that they are mistaken if they believe that Republicans in South Carolina are rock-ribbed conservatives. The Republican establishment is merely a pork-barrel machine, though manned by folks who are instinctually more conservative than their compatriots in Connecticut or Illinois, which is why none of our federal judges has interfered in this matter. The legendary Strom Thurmond long ago traded the role of Dixiecrat for that of the World's Greatest Patronage Artist.)

The battle has been joined again, with the NAACP declaring a boycott of the state until the flag is removed. So far, this has had little effect. In some quarters, there have been expressions of satisfaction: "Does this mean Myrtle Beach won't get to host Freaknik?" But the social forces that have so far defeated an anti-flag campaign backed by Big Politics, Big Business, Big Civil Rights, Big Religion, and Big Media are worth some attention.

To begin with, members of the legislature, which has the deciding say in the matter, have to listen to real voters rather than to banks and newspapers—at least part of the time. And *pace* Samuel Francis, the Council of Conservative Citizens was not responsible for saving our flag. Its efforts, including rallies by tattooed motorcycle thugs and David Duke followers, have been resoundingly counterproductive—just what the media wanted.

Rather, the battle has been won because we are still a people, nearly unique among turn-of-the-millennium Americans, with a real historical memory. A lot of us know how great-grandfather died with the colors at Gettysburg or was starved and frozen to death by the Yankees at Elmira. Or how great-grandmother was burned out of house and home and had the jewelry ripped from her ears by liberators in blue.

We also know that we made a bargain at the end of Reconstruction: As long as we served the United States loyally, our history would be a respected part of the American story. We have done our share—or perhaps more—in every one of the wars since. The other side, as usual, has failed to keep its part of the bargain. There is now a concerted effort to expunge us. Several U.S. military directives have banned "the Confederate flag, the Nazi swastika, and curse words" from the empire's property. In neighboring North Carolina, civilian employees of the Coast Guard were threatened with security investigations for having Sons of Confederate Veterans stickers on their private vehicles. Isn't this the way ethnic cleansing starts?

Recently, a Catholic academy in Greenville fired its best teacher because he refused to remove a small Confederate flag that hung in his classroom along with a number of other historical American flags. The demand for removal resulted from a complaint by a *prospective* parent, a recent arrival from Jamaica, who also complained about the crosses.

And St. Michael's Episcopal Church, one of the two most historic churches in historic Charleston, has, because of the flag, refused to permit the Sons of Confederate Veterans to hold a memorial service for the heroic crew of the CSA submarine Hunley. (This is the second crew, not the one the movie was made about. They are still at the bottom of the bay.) Not only does St. Michael's yard contain the bones of numerous Southern heroes, but its steeple was used as a rangefinder by the Unionists during the brutal 1863-65 siege of the city. The Episcopal hierarchy continues its apparently irreversible slide into communism and sodomy.

The Confederate battle flag, someone should tell the authorities at St. Michael's Church, is only one of two national flags in the Western Hemisphere that is based on a Christian, rather than a Jacobin, design. The other flies in Quebec.

We begin to see a pattern here, and one we don't like. We are not going down that slippery slope if we can help it. So our flag on the capitol has become an issue transcending a merely prudential matter. The main argument for removal has been that the flag offends black citizens. (Opponents also claim it is bad for business, which is patently untrue.) But it is not at all clear that black citizens, as distinct from their self-appointed spokespersons, feel this way. And interestingly, according to polls, a good half of the thousands of Rust Belt refugees who have settled among us in recent times are pro-flag. Indeed, I would think even admirers of Old Abe and Billy Sherman would take alarm at the anti-Confederate hatred that is in full cry these days.

The real impulse behind the well-financed anti-flag campaign is imperialism. Columbia, South Carolina, is not to be permitted to differ from Columbus, Ohio, except in cutesy ways that will attract outsiders who will graciously employ our people to change their sheets and fix their toilets. Our newspapers, which used to be local, are now owned by chains and manned by lowbrow creatures from Detroit. The Columbia paper is Exhibit A. Founded by a family that included a Confederate cavalry general and an heroic Cuban revolutionary (pre-1898), it is now the property of Knight-Ridder. The paper recently invited an articulate local citizen to write a pro-flag op-ed. They changed his language to mean the opposite of what he had said in order to make it sound "racist."

Yours Truly has been interviewed numerous times by journalists, several of whom have told me that everything re-

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ported on the issue is tightly controlled by management. Recently, the AP carried a long story with a few paragraphs of pro-flag comment by Yours Truly. The "local" newspaper cut my comments out. Normal journalistic practice would be to emphasize the local angle of a story. But pro-flag comments from a local semi-dignitary who has never belonged to the Ku Klux Klan could not be permitted to mar the official line.

The flag of our ancestors goes along with the Nazi swastika! That is the story now repeated everywhere. Nazi Germany was a totalitarian state. There was no barbed wire around the plantations. They were places where people were born and lived. Places that many of them, black and white, remembered as consoling, at least compared to what came later. The Southern Confederacy was so free that, even in the midst of ruthless invasion, the government never suppressed persons, newspapers, or local or state governments, something Mr. Lincoln found necessary repeatedly. And we never tried to conquer another country. We were the ones invaded and conquered by a stronger power. That our flag represents Nazism would be a surprise to the South Carolina captain who raised it over the castle on Okinawa as part of the first squad inside. And to his commander, Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., son of the CSA general of the same name. And to Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, Jr., who died in the skies over Germany in 1944. Will we now have to change the name of the "Memphis Belle" to the "Cleveland Playmate"?

Clyde Wilson is a professor of American history at the University of South Carolina.

Letter From Belgrade

by Srdja Trifkovic

Serbia Degraded

◆

"*Serbia delenda est*," declared our post-modern, post-civilized rulers in the spring of 1999. Most European countries went along with the verdict. Like Muscovites in 1938, they were thankful that the nocturnal knock was not on their door, and prayed that acquiescence would absolve them of the suspicion of disloyalty. The alternative is to get Serbianized, and that prospect is truly frightening, as any visitor to rump Yugoslavia may testify.

To this long-lost native son, returning to Belgrade last fall was a melancholy experience. It brought to mind Robert Louis Stevenson's warning that "there are few things more strange, more painful, or more salutary, than such revisitations," with the traveler "smitten with an equal regret for what he once was and for what he once hoped to be." The sight of this once vibrantly joyous, now impoverished and utterly ruined city evoked memories of school trips to Budapest, Prague, or Warsaw almost three decades ago. Back then, a Serbian teenager could only thank his lucky stars that his country was outside the Soviet bloc. Compared with those drab citadels of "real" socialism, Belgrade was a paragon of *joie de vivre* and reckless consumerism. Even on the eve of Yugoslavia's violent disintegration, the city's cafés were brimming with life, its streets with color, its writing with talent, its young with energy and hope.

Twelve years of Slobodan Milosevic, seven years of punitive sanctions, and 78 days of NATO bombing have changed all that. The city now combines an East European grayness and quiet desperation with the poverty and lawlessness of the Third World. Crumbling façades of once-elegant neoclassical buildings, belching Yugos long past their discard-by date, and improvised cardboard bazaars along the city's tree-lined boulevards leave little to the imagination: Things are every bit as bad as they look. Eerie, burnt-out shells of structures bombed by NATO only add a surreal touch. The economy is in free-fall, inflation rampant yet again, infrastructure in tatters, social services nearly nonexistent, and median income one-tenth that in the United States.

"When I look at the indicators, I wonder how these people survive," says Branko Milanovic, a Belgrade native and now an economist with the World Bank in Washington, D.C. Most workers did not have much to do even before NATO reduced the country's factories to rubble, and now many try to make ends meet selling Rumanian gas from canisters on street corners or smuggling a few cartons of Bulgarian "Marlboros" to be sold in open-air markets. The black market flourishes: Even after having Kosovo snatched from it by NATO, Serbia remains under sanctions. This ruins the people but helps the regime maintain control, its loyalists growing rich through smuggling fuel, tobacco, timber, or fertilizer. The middle class has been wiped out, its offspring dispersed from Toronto to Johannesburg to Wellington. The intellectuals despair over the fact that the Serbs are fatally squeezed between the hammer of "the West" and the anvil of Slobodan Milosevic, a misshapen tyrant who will not flap his wings for as long as he can feed on the ever-shrinking innards of Inner Serbia.

That man, and his rabidly doctrinaire communist wife, embody all that went wrong with Serbia's body politic over the past decade and a half. Its power structure has not really changed since Marshal Tito's days, but the key players have become infinitely more corrupt. Unlike his Croatian, Muslim, or Albanian counterparts, Milosevic had never been the "hard-line nationalist" of 10,000 Western editorials. He is a cynical apparatchik who cleverly exploited Serbian frustrations with Tito's setup in order to grab power back in 1987, and to ensure the continued survival of the power structure. Only by kidnapping the mantle of nationalism could he accrue some legitimacy for himself and his party cronies, frightened by the collapse of communism in the rest of Eastern Europe. He subsequently betrayed his early supporters, of course, but by then it was too late.

As Dusan Batakovic, an historian active in opposition politics, says:

> Milosevic is a true friend of the policymakers in the West in that he is also a deracinated, autocratic anti-traditionalist who fears all that is authentic—including nationalism. That explains the ease with which Milosevic sold the Serbs of the Krajina and Bosnia down the river, and abandoned Kosovo without a real fight. That also explains his attractiveness to the West—the usual rhetoric notwithstanding: In Washington they know that he'll always cave in, that he is the standing guarantee of all Serb defeats.

Vojislav Kostunica, president of the Democratic Party of Serbia, agrees:

> The U.S. administration will seek to keep Milosevic in power while

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continuing to degrade Serbia. Only after Montenegro, Sanjak, and Vojvodina are gone, or given some extraordinary autonomous status . . . equal to independence, Serbia's impoverished rump may be finally deemed ripe for a new Gauleiter. But even then this is not certain, because the leaders of the West like to deal with Milosevic; he is so predictable.

Indeed, in the aftermath of the U.S.-led war against the Serbs, with Kosovo occupied by NATO and duly cleansed of its remaining Serbs and other non-Albanians, it would be naive to assume that the Balkan crisis is finally over. Dr. Kostunica warns that Washington's policy is an almost knee-jerk reaction: "to continue slicing the Serbian salami, contrary to law, morality, history, reason, and rational U.S. interests."

The overwhelming perception among the people of Serbia—opponents of the regime included—of a fundamental anti-Serb bias in U.S. policy enables Milosevic to linger on in power in spite of the seemingly endless stream of disasters and defeats the nation has endured under him. The opposition is notoriously divided, but its leaders agree that NATO's bombing of civilian targets last spring was an outrage. Ironically, they are asked by "the West" to shed such views and quietly accept the bombing as justified before their democratic *bona fides* will be accepted. Their reluctance to sign a statement to this effect meant that they were not welcome at a recent European Union summit in Luxembourg—which was misreported as their "boycott" of the meeting.

And so Milosevic stays, and sanctions stay. He needs them to survive, and they stay because he stays in power. As Simon Jenkins of the *Times* of London noted after a visit to Serbia:

> As in Iraq, sanctions make the rulers rich and everyone else, the professionals, the merchants and the workers, poor. They pollute the political economy and degrade public order. The Marxist in Mr. Cook seems to think sanctions encourage the workers to rise up in revolt. They do the opposite. They increasingly offer Mr. Milosevic an excuse for extra-constitutional action. I could not find a single person in Yugoslavia who regarded sanctions as anything but counterproductive.

By collectively castigating the Serbs because of Milosevic and thus enabling him to remain in power, the U.S. administration ensures that Serbia will continue its descent into misery. Serbia is being deliberately reduced to the level of weakness of the other Balkan actors in an unsubtle exercise of *divide et impera*. But this bizarre scenario should not continue unchallenged. Of course it is wrong to demonize, ostracize, and starve a nation because of its rulers, even if they are every bit as bad as we are told Mr. Milosevic is. But besides being morally bankrupt, this policy is strategically irrational, and at odds with any sober definition of American interests in southeast Europe.

A new order in the Balkans that openly satisfies the aspirations of virtually all ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia—at the expense of some nine million Serbs—is inherently unstable. The Serbs may soon be forced to burn a pinch of incense at the altar of the New World Order, but they are unlikely to accept the brutal *pax Americana* in their lands forever. If they are given no stake in the ensuing order of things, their lingering revanchist ire will ensure another bout of bloodletting in the Balkans long after this abysmal presidency is relegated to the locker of America's bad memories.

Srdja Trifkovic is the executive director of the Lord Byron Foundation for Balkan Studies.

Letter From Venice

by Andrei Navrozov

The Values of Unreal Estate

◆

I must write something about the man from Los Angeles who has come to stay, which is awkward for two reasons. One problem is that bashing the Ugly American is a cliché of European journalism, only slightly less ugly than the idea that Europe—the United States of Europe, ideally—ought to emulate the United States in every particular. Here I hasten to assure the reader that what follows is not an attempt at generalization: I'm sure Pat Buchanan, for instance, isn't in the least like my guest, nor were Emerson, Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot . . . Who else is there? The other problem is that I *am* about to vent my spleen, which, inevitably, will sound monstrously inhospitable. All I can say, by way of apology, is that I have been pushed to the limit.

Let me start at the beginning. There was a time when the very landscape of the United States—Manhattan's skyscrapers, enormous cars with tail fins, writers drunk on bourbon, aircraft carriers that ruled the waves—intimidated the European visitor, forcing him into a spasm of revaluation: What was he, for all his descent from some Norman swordsman, who was this tweedy, balding, hesitant insect in the path of the Chrysler Building? But the world moved on, Moscow began making its submarines of seamless titanium, Hong Kong built its share of skyscrapers. Obviously, the stock prices of internet companies are no substitute for a landscape, nor is Kosovo for Korea.

The tables have turned. Hugh Grant is a matinee idol. Intellectually and spiritually, it is Europe—its surviving beauty, its superior serenity, its continued existence—which is now deeply insulting to my American guest. And, if I had recognized this beforehand as his Achilles' heel, and set out to offend him deliberately, I could not have picked a better place than Venice, and our apartment over the Grand Canal, in the palazzo where Byron lived.

The American is rich, you see. He owns a house in Beverly Hills from whose windows you can see the scene of the Manson murders. Tour buses pass by, touting celebrity: "There's Barbra's house over there!" Naturally, he has a keen sense of his place in the upper tier of the American social pyramid. And here he is, with his monogrammed luggage from T. Anthony in New York, delivered by motorboat into our palazzo's cavernous *androne* with a wellhead of white marble in the middle. He has no idea who Byron is ("Byron who?" he asks, and I cannot answer him because I presume he has never heard of anybody called Lord, nobody who is white I mean). He does not suspect that his matching set of luggage is actually made in Vicenza. He has never learned to eat spaghetti without a knife. But he has eyes and by his own admission he knows a thing or two about real estate, and this is

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his downfall.

He is insulted from the start, from his first glimpse of that other life, my life, a life I have every right to characterize, on the basis of income-tax returns and sworn affidavits from intimate friends, as the life of a poor struggling writer. He does not say, "But how can you afford this?" because it isn't me, and my success or failure, which are on his mind just then, but his own power, and his own exalted position in the American social pyramid. He takes the private lift up to the galleried hall of the *piano attico*. Marble, marble, marble. Ornate ceilings. Oak parquet. All awash with autumnal light. Yes, Lord Byron slept here, and not always alone, while there, from that mullioned window overlooking the Grand Canal at San Tomà, he would lean out in his shirtsleeves, waving to the gondoliers below, but that is not the point. The point is, he knows a thing or two about real estate, and now his worldview is tottering, and the ever-triumphant voice of the Hollywood tour guide that has sustained his prestige, and injected his family with the sweet, heady sense of earthly achievement, is so much faint patter.

Tottering, but not crumbling. Not a single fissure, not even the smallest chink. I marvel at its earthquake-proof elasticity, which brings to mind the purges in Stalin's Russia, when a faithful old Bolshevik, with a lifetime of ardent service to socialism behind him, would open the door to his ostensible brethren of the NKVD who had come to arrest his ailing bedridden wife as a Bolivian spy and a trafficker in gold bullion. And guess what? More often than not, that poor sod's worldview—rendered elastic by a thousand similar exercises in years past—managed to absorb the shock of the absurd, recover, and go on functioning until the last circle was squared in the back of his own head with the aid of a few grams of lead.

The European, his intellectual shell crushed like that of an egg by the architecture of New York and the power of America, used to fall silent, more often than not for the rest of his natural life. The American, flattened like a ball of Wrigley's spearmint gum by the beauty of Venice and the luxury of Europe, talks even more than usual. He talks to waiters in restaurants. He shows wallet snaps of his children to shop girls selling masks. He talks to the gondoliers by the Rialto, and the remarkable thing is that all the while he does not seem to know whether he, Haroon al Rashid in the disguise of Joe Blow, wants to be treated by these strangers as a prince or a pauper. This is a classic of infantile psychology, a mental maneuver, incidentally, beloved of Dostoyevsky: If someone snubs him as an ordinary American tourist who thinks *involtini* are a kind of fish, he turns capricious ("But I *told* him I don't want any fish! Or veal!") and vindictive ("Right, there goes *his* tip!"), but if you indulge him, he becomes suspicious ("They're trying to rip me off!") and defensive ("What does *she* want? I bet you anything she knows *exactly* who I am!").

He is what they call a piece of work. With me he thinks he can be "open," meaning talk frankly, and all he wants to talk about frankly is money: why I make so little of it, why I spend so much of it, why he makes so much of it, why he spends so much of it, why he doesn't make more of it, why I should make more of it, how I should make more of it, how everybody should make more of it . . . Mark Twain, in one of his European travelogues, makes up a conversation between two peasants, Swiss I think, who discuss cow dung *ad infinitum*, and until now I used to think this was just a flight of fancy, a lighthearted, inconsequential squib. No, it turns out that it is perfectly possible to watch, breathe, and adore money 24 hours a day, as if bank notes were an agricultural fertilizer and man were a stalk of seakale beet in an inaccessible Alpine village.

I now understand that, for him, reality—American reality first and foremost, of course, and colonial reality to the extent it can be translated into imperial terms, real estate and other—is form, while money (which translates itself according to the current rate of exchange, not counting commission) is the content that fills the form the way a colored liquid may be observed following the contours of a glass vessel, or the way bronze is cast. But this image is much too concrete and tangible, too phenomenal I would say, to do any profound justice to his worldview. Money, for him, operates on the submolecular level. It is atomic. The nape of a woman's neck, the feather of a seabird, the oar of a boat, all of this real estate is run through the spectrograph of his mind and analyzed for carbon content. And this palazzo in Venice is so rich in carbon!

When, after three days, he finally leaves on the first morning flight to Paris, I feel I have aged beyond words. That evening I meet for the first time the Roman coloratura Cecilia Bartoli, in Venice to sing Vivaldi, whom a mutual friend brings to the house:

Dite, oimè, ditelo al fine:
Deggio vivere o morir?
Sta mia vita in sul confine,
Pronta è già l'alma ad uscir!

She is a great beauty, dark, with huge, dramatic eyes like moist horse chestnuts and the proverbial alabaster skin, and as I listen to the mezzo-soprano to end all mezzo-sopranos, to the woman lamenting in the Venetian idiom of Scipione Maffei that her life is on the brink and her soul about to depart, I cannot stop looking at her neck and her shoulders, in silhouette against the carved balusters of the upper gallery where my son is hiding with a bouquet of wild flowers.

Looking, and thinking: What does that cost? And who can afford it?

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

Letter From Beijing

by Gregory McNamee

The Second Cultural Revolution?

◆

Cultural bridges are sometimes made of unlikely materials. One, for instance, is the hoary Steppenwolf rocker-stomper "Born to Be Wild," a favorite of the Western suds, studs, and leather crowd for three decades, and now, thanks to an accident of history, a fixture at the karaoke bar of Beijing's Minzu Hotel.

Although I protested my unsuitability to the task, I was pressed into service there to inaugurate the song, recently added to the Minzu's jukebox. I am now glad I did. There are many worse songs to sing in public, and my reward for performing the gritty tune before a crowd of 200 or so Chinese men and women was manifold: I was roundly applauded, offered dozens of drinks, and treated to a good-natured skewering from a Chinese stand-up comedian who looked eerily like Mickey Rooney's character in *Break-*

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fast at Tiffany's, with a dollop of Curly Howard thrown in.

I was also given an education in modern Chinese politics, for the comic had more pressing business than simply to make sport of me and my decadent Western ways. He disappeared from the stage for a few minutes, during which time a squadron of heartachingly beautiful models showed a line of clothing that melded the high style of Cheryl Tiegs' K-Mart fashions with the functionality of People's Liberation Army garb. When he returned, the comic, no longer smirking, was dressed in a Red Guard cadre's uniform, vintage 1966. Above his head he hoisted an evidently well-thumbed copy of the *Little Red Book*. As a disco tune rose in the background, he began to sing in a high, lovely voice.

I could make out only a little of the song he performed, but it was clear it was a protest tune of some sort—clear because of the *yi-er-san-se* (hup-two-three-four) chorus, clear because of the discomfort that spread throughout the audience, seated within spitting distance of Tiananmen Square. When I asked a Chinese friend to translate the lyrics, he looked at me sadly and said, "I don't understand his dialect."

The next day, having conferred with his father on the propriety of telling a foreigner about his country's troubles, even secondhand, my friend shared with me what the comic had sung. His tune concerned a student from Beijing University who had been sent into the fields during the Cultural Revolution, full of enthusiasm for deepening the peasants' sense of historical obligation and class allegiance, and who became disenchanted with the official corruption he saw all around him.

My friend, who himself had been sent into the fields in 1967, was astonished to hear such a song sung so openly. So was his father, a cardiologist who, during the Cultural Revolution, was removed from his clinical practice, denounced for having been poisoned by Western ideas, and forced to carry corpses from his hospital to a nearby potter's field for the next three years.

But that was in a different China, remembered only by those 35 and older, those men and women who gave me knowing nods on my daily, thoughtful strolls through Tiananmen Square. That was a China of famine and terror and unspeakable hardship, in which millions died over mere words, a far cry from the modern China of glittering skyscrapers, video CD players, and foreign joint ventures. In this new China, even the name "Cultural Revolution" has fallen out of favor. The preferred euphemism for that terrible, bloody time is now "the period of domestic turmoil."

China is a country where such small changes in phrasing have enormous meaning, where slogans replace independent thought. One such slogan, one that I heard everywhere I traveled, is "black cat, white cat," a reference to former Premier Deng Xiaoping's 1991 decree that the Communist Party would henceforth stop debating whether a given measure was socialist or capitalist in nature. "It doesn't matter," Deng said, "whether a cat is white or black. If it catches the mouse, it is a good cat."

But evidently it does matter, for the new China is shedding socialism as quickly as it can in the apparent belief that the white capitalist cat promises to trap more mice. Socialism is dead, or very nearly so, despite the government's apparent commitment to maintaining Deng's program of "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

Instead, Pepsi signs far outnumber red flags everywhere, and all China is caught up in a frenzy of new construction and business start-ups. In Shanghai, I wandered through a Communist Party recruiting rally that would have been utterly unpeopled save that the cadres were offering free haircuts, which drew a handful of takers. And whereas Tiananmen Square once sported monumental posters depicting Mao Zedong, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Zhou Enlai, and other stalwarts of Chinese communism, on this particular October day, which commemorated the anniversary of the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party, the massive plaza had only one such graphic: a poster carrying the image of Sun Yat-Sen, who led the democratic revolution that overthrew the so-called last emperor in 1911.

In state socialism's stead is the rising of democracy in all its messy glory—a democracy that includes the largely unknown ability to disagree. I had come to China as a student of the martial arts and as a tourist first, and only incidentally as a journalist, but everywhere I traveled I was treated to little tidbits of dissent, issued by government functionaries, students, and working people alike.

Some of the comments were less than profound. For instance, one Communist Party member said to me, "The government has fun. They drink. They smoke. They go with girls. But they don't want the people to do this. Then they lose control of the people." But other comments carried more meaning. Said another party member, looking at the well-dressed young people on Shanghai's Nanjing Road, "In the 70's, we had blue Mao suits. In the 80's, we had business suits. In the 90's, we have T-shirts."

He was right: T-shirts, the uniform of neoliberalism and Pax Coca-Cola, are everywhere. But China is changing in more than just fashion. In a generation, the standard of living has improved dramatically in almost every sector of society. There has been an immense reduction in poverty throughout the country. In the wake of the one-child revolution, "me first" consumerism is rising, and, for the first time ever, there is plenty to consume, albeit at fearful cost to the environment.

China's growth is astonishing; its economy is projected to surpass that of the United States and to become the world's largest no later than 2020. Within the country, signs of this growth are everywhere. Old wood-and-brick neighborhoods in Beijing are being bulldozed away in the name of progress, displacing hundreds and thousands of people; one such neighborhood, not far from Tiananmen Square, is being remade into a 24-story megaplaza with shopping malls, health clubs, luxury condominiums, and four-star hotels.

Whether all this will bring democracy—whether, as the libertarians maintain, free markets truly do bring political freedom—remains to be seen. As we Americans wait and watch, we will want to curb our impatience with the way China does things. That way is changing, to be sure, but on certain matters China will not budge.

One of them is Tibet. It is a sad fact, but a fact nonetheless, that China views Tibet as a province of the larger Chinese state and that, after an ambitious program of colonization, more Han Chinese than ethnic Tibetans now live in that province. The urge to restore a free Tibet is a matter of misplaced nostalgia. It is proper to deplore China's actions in Tibet, but it is probably necessary to accept the Dalai Lama's grim view that Tibetan culture will flourish only outside Tibet.

We can also expect that the Chinese government, even if it is more responsive to ideas of democracy, will not gladly lis-

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ten to our lectures on human rights, as President Jiang Zemin made clear in his visit to the United States in the fall of 1997. Although he is a comparative youngster at 70, Premier Zhu Rongji is unlikely to reverse the gerontocracy's way of doing things too quickly in any but the economic realm; the old men responsible for the Tiananmen Square massacre still hold sway.

Even so, change is coming. One small index is the importance of goods manufactured by prison labor to the Chinese economy: According to a recent *Washington Post* article, these goods account for only one-fifth of one percent of China's Gross National Product, a far smaller figure than don't-buy-Chinese-exports propagandists would have it. Historically, Americans have bridled whenever foreign governments have pressured us to do things their way; we should not be surprised when the Chinese government applies the same standard to our entreaties.

Neither, I hasten to add, must we kowtow to the Chinese state when it is clearly in the wrong.

But if the Chinese are not yet quite ready to declare themselves "born to be wild," they are taking real steps toward liberty. The times are changing, and faster than anyone can track. Said that old cardiologist, who had suffered so much, "I think socialism is good. Communism is good. But the government has not let the people talk. Talking about what's good or bad— that is socialism."

Perhaps so. There is now much talk in the air in China. With that talk, socialism is disappearing, and another revolution, profound and dislocating, is in the making.

Gregory McNamee is the author of many books, including Gila: The Life and Death of an American River *(University of New Mexico Press).*

Letter From Scotland

by Bryan Giemza

Busspotting

◆

On my short list of Great Equalizers, I would jot "The Chainsaw," "The Automobile," and "The Internet" without hesitation. In a separate category dubbed Great Equalizing *Experiences*, I would begin with the axiomatic two: "Death" and "Taxes." My next entry would be century-specific: "Bus Travel."

I've experienced bus travel in many places, primarily in countries where buses are designed to accommodate, in lavish comfort, midgets. Bus travel has come a long way in Britain, and given the motorways and scale of the island, it's not hard to see why the bus has supplanted rail as the busiest conduit of human traffic. While the fixtures of the bus station are fairly new—the fluorescent uniforms for conductors, and the sleek, charcoal-tinted double-decker night buses that smell of oil, rubber, and recently pressed plastic—the form of the place is certainly nothing new.

Glasgow's bus station is well suited to a city that is still plainly painted with its industrial past. The brownstone flats are limned by smears of old soot, and in a city that spends most of the year under rain, the effect is endearingly gritty. It is a place that is resilient in the shadow of factory fallout. Indeed, the abiding impression of Glasgow is that it lives under a cloud, both literally and figuratively. The city's flowers are found in the pavement cracks: in the pubs, in the comportment of the people in shops, and yes, even in the bus station. There is a merriment in the bustle of the place, and something charmingly old-fashioned about seeing papers and sweets loaded into the bins of buses destined for small Scottish villages. Perhaps it is just a matter of incongruity: that on a bleak morning there could be such cheer.

I shouldn't be surprised. Mist-shrouded Ireland produced Van Morrison, who sings as soulfully about Tupelo honey as any Delta singer in the sun-kissed Southland. And the South is greatly on my mind after two months of rain without a clear day. The chilly Glasgow nights are stirred by warm sea currents. So, too, the hearts of the restless city dwellers who nightly bestir themselves to the streets. I take a walk through the scrimshaw spiderwebs of the city's night lights and the rain that dances like waterbugs on the street-lit pavements.

The next morning, I find myself at the bus station, destinationless and bemused by the travelers' caffeinated early morn *bonhomie*. I resolve to board a bus to visit friends in Dundee, a place famed for west-coast weather, which is to say the errant sunny day. An hour into the journey, a young man in his middle 20's drops into the seat beside me. Give people any seat to choose from, and they always choose to sit beside me. The smell of tobacco burns an acrid imprint in my nostrils. It is as if the man himself has been slowly burned up. His jaw is etched with scars. He will not make eye contact with me, but he talks, and he fumes. At first, I think he is talking to himself. I pause in my reading and strain to make out his words through his slurry of Scottish glottals. I understand the slang; it comes with being around young Scots. Even so, I can only make out half of it. He needs money for methadone. He is incredulous of his own body.

I mean, look at me.

I haven't been. He has endured another stint in rehab. He needs a new clinic where he will not be abused, or so he has it made out. He considers, in the alternative, that a bottle of vodka might just carry the night for him.

People always choose to talk to me. I suspect that this is because I will listen to just about anyone. I don't know how the talkers spot the listeners, but they do.

It's f---ed up. Some of the dreams in the clinics, you kinna bear them; it'll f---you up.

I answer softly, as a Scot would.

Aye.

I do not want him to realize that I am not a Scot. A foreigner is an easy mark. This might be the first lie of our conversation. I have been a child of the wayward wind, and I've seen more of this blue marble in my short years than most do in a lifetime. Only once did someone peg me. I asked a question of a foreign-born man in a queue in Budapest. He marked me at once: "You're a Southerner." I was startled. My accent is not heavy. Yet this foreigner knew, he said, based on the way I approached him. He said I was polite, deferential. Reticent.

If you've ever seen Trainspotting, *that bit with the dreams, tha's what it's like. It's shite-like.*

I resist the impulse to think of him as having emerged from *Trainspotting*, the film about Scottish junkies. He is real. Our conversation is not. It is his monologue, a chronologically scrambled stream-of-consciousness listing of friends and relations imprisoned, of drugs and counteracting drugs, of dosages down to the milliliter, of the haphazard injustice of institutions in which he has found himself immured. He does not seem to

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fault the institutions. He just keeps small grudges, as if they are all he can afford. He was shorted at the bus station. The nurses didn't listen. Most of his time had been on auto theft.

Daft, innit?

When he advises me not to get into drugs, it is the only moment in the conversation that comes close to levity. The relentless stream of the cheerful dance music favored by the Scots churns merrily along. Someone shouts to turn it off.

Boy you got to carry that weight . . .

An old Beatles favorite has been redone. Mercury tadpoles of rain stream over the window. He continues to talk.

I remember the ex-cons I lived with as a volunteer in a halfway house. It is familiar to me: the distrust that borders on a survival instinct, the impulse to help. As with the ex-cons, "f---ing" is the staple of his speech, a choking sincerity. His is indeed a world of things rubbing up against each other, clashing, grinding, making more, a violence of machinery that is (gratefully) alien to me. But his talk of sex isn't a particular crudity. I realize that he loved a girl once. I'm certain of that much.

I couldna e'en shag me bird; I'm three months waiting on the AIDS test now.

I imagine what it would be like. I try for a while. I turn from it. I cannot pretend to imagine. My life has been good.

I have this peculiar curse. I am a local wherever I go. People joke with me in the pubs and then try to hide their disappointment when I speak. Foreigner. How could it be? I cannot talk to others, but they can talk to me. I am so inoffensive that I am a shadow. I am good at being the figurative fly on the wall.

. . . carry that weight . . .

He has 80 pence. I know. I watched him count it twice. Not to make a point, either. Orange asters unfold in his hazel eyes like dead, pinned starfish. His eyes are unrevealing, absent. He is talking about how methadone addiction is worse than the heroin. Something about the liquid food and medication given in lockdown. I have set aside my book. I note in detached fashion that his hands are soiled. But they are not strong. A set of nicotine stains on thumb and forefinger match the parchment of his lip. My own hands are still shabby, tan, hearty, folded as neatly as shirts on my lap.

Put you off your book, haven't I?

That's all right.

His speech continues. It is like hearing a set of demons chammering on, a hurt so fragmented that it has torn itself to oblivion and grown eerily calm, content with its own diminishing noise. A spent cinder. There are others. He admires a man who is serving six years. Slit a throat. I wonder if he admires the man or admires his suffering. The two are liable to be inseparable for him. There is much nodding between us. We have little in common. We have everything in common.

. . . a long time . . .

I cannot sort out all the drugs, and what does what for him, and why. There is no innocence in the precision of this litany: meta-, -mine, something or other. There is a certain terrifying f---ed-upness about it. This is not a word I use lightly. It is not a word I use.

He has mastered the chemistry of his dying soul. Where I come from, I was not made to worry about it. The only panhandlers were downtown. I didn't have much business downtown. And alcohol seems simple.

I have that peculiar aching sympathy, unique to foreknowledge, that what I do won't be enough. But there is something I can do. He thinks I am local. I do not speak. I have nothing to say. Speech would be as superfluous to me as tears to him.

After a time, I stop trying to read. Or rather, stop holding the book open. I think that he admitted that part of his chat came from withdrawal from one of myriad substances. It seemed to be out of his hands, as if he were under the sway of a truth serum. Maybe he was. There is another reason to blather with a stranger, though. Words are free, like the wind, virtually effortless. He was remembering that he still existed. Everything was empty in memory. He could sound himself through me, though. Something might be gained. Something might unfold. I am hoping against it.

The radio is singing. It will not shut up.

You never give me your money . . .

Inevitably, he comes around to it. I have been waiting for it. It is a little betrayal between us, a little dirt. He knows it. I know it. It can't be helped. I want to help.

Don't suppose you could spare a quid?

I reply in Scottish slang.

Sorry, I'm absolutely skint.

It's true. I have £20 on me, enough to buy a return ticket and eat with my friends. It isn't quite satisfactory, though.

you only give me your (inspiration?) . . .

Just before the bus arrives, he asks if I'll have a few pints with him. I wouldn't mind buying him a pint. But I know what will follow. I cannot sort him out with a pint. That's what I tell myself.

Sorry.

Tha's a-right.

We are at the station. He uses that peculiar conclusive Scots expression.

Tha's me, then, awee.

Rising, he looks at me for the first time, calmly, resigned, without malice. Empty. He winks and vanishes into the station, vanishes in the way that someone who lives in stations can disappear. There isn't time to reconsider. He is gone. That's him, then, away.

On the way to my friend's flat, I look over my shoulder from time to time.

* * *

I passed a woman begging in the rain one night in Glasgow.

Spare 20 pee?

I didn't reply. It was not a time for hesitation. I went to the nearest chippy and bought a bag of fries. They steamed in the night, sharp with vinegar, lovely crystalline starches lumped in the thin brown paper. Starch. Warmth in hand. Nourishment.

I returned to the stoop to give the woman the parcel. I found the alley, glistening a little in an oil slick of fresh pavement under streetlights.

But she was gone, disappeared. Too late.

I have this odd curse on me. I'm a local wherever I go.

Bryan Giemza writes from Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

LIBERAL ARTS

THE MONEYCHANGERS ARE BACK

"Israel's National Parks Authority approved a project at Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee that will allow tourists to walk on water just like Jesus did. A 13-foot-wide, 28-foot-long, crescent-shaped floating bridge will be submerged two inches below the lake's surface, accommodating up to 50 people. It will have no railing in order to enhance the effect of walking on water, but lifeguards and boats will be ready in case anyone slips off. The attraction is part of a host of projects approved for the millennium, when authorities expect 4 million pilgrims to visit."

—*from the* Syracuse New Times *(August 25-September 1, 1999)*

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ECONOMICS

Debt Money and the Federal Debt

by Gus R. Stelzer

In 1985, I was a resident of Rancho Sante Fe, California, and a member of the prestigious Rancho Sante Fe Golf and Country Club. I often played golf with "Jack" (not his real name), who was listed in *Forbes* magazine as one of the 400 richest people in America. On one occasion, as we were walking down the fairways, I talked about the evils of a rising federal debt, then about $1.8 trillion.

After some 20 minutes of talk (mostly mine), Jack stopped walking and said, "Gus, you worry too much about the federal debt. I hold $15 million worth of federal T-bills. They're risk-free, and they're paying me over a million dollars a year in interest. The higher the debt goes, the more T-bills I will buy, and the more interest I will get. Anyway, tomorrow, Madge [his wife] and I are flying to Tahiti for two weeks, and I'm not going to worry about the federal debt. It's a money-maker as far as I'm concerned."

Today, the federal debt is over three times as large as it was when Jack told me what the debt is really all about. His message was: "There is big money in it for the financial elite . . . individuals with considerable discretionary wealth, banks, insurance companies, securities brokers, currency speculators, and others who build fortunes on debt and on the backs of people who pay the interest."

Without the general populace being aware, the monetary system of the United States has been transformed. Today, the gap between rich and poor is wider than at any other time in American history. We are gradually becoming a two-tier society, like most Latin American countries.

The federal debt functions as a mechanism to transfer the wealth of the "poor and middle class" to ten percent of our population, who already own or control 90 percent of private wealth. The federal debt is a gold mine for money lenders!

Today, the federal debt is about $5.6 trillion, of which $2 trillion is owed to various trust funds, such as Social Security, Medicare, veterans' benefits, highways, railroad, etc. The balance, about $3.6 trillion, is "publicly held" debt, against which T-bills have been issued by the Treasury Department. Of that amount, about $2.3 trillion is held by U.S. citizens and institutions who already own, or control, 90 percent of our national wealth, and the federal government pays them over $140 billion a year in interest.

The balance (about $1.3 trillion) is owned by citizens of foreign countries (Japan, Germany, Britain, Taiwan, Communist China, etc.) with whom the United States has racked up $2.6 trillion in merchandise trade deficits since 1971. Up until that time, foreign holders of our dollars could "cash them in" at a rate of $35 for one ounce of our gold, under the terms of the 1944 Bretton Woods monetary accord.

As a result of rising imports in the late 1960's and early 1970's and the consequent outflow of U.S. dollars, our gold reserves were being depleted at an alarming rate. So, on August 15, 1971, President Nixon announced we would no longer honor our Bretton Woods commitment.

Now that they could not convert our currency into gold, the foreign beneficiaries of our $2.6 trillion trade deficit cashed half of the dollars that they held in on federal T-bills. Today, our government pays them over $70 billion a year in interest to get our own money back!

Thus, the federal government is now paying over $210 billion in interest each year to finance the debt, a large part of which was caused by immoral trade policies that sabotaged our industrial tax base, closed thousands of factories, and shipped the jobs of over ten million law-abiding workers to countries that do *not* abide by our laws.

In order to pay that interest, the government must collect taxes from U.S. citizens at a rate of about $2,000 per American household. This money is siphoned out of the wallets of average Americans and then transferred to those who already own or control 90 percent of our nation's private wealth, thereby steadily widening the gap between rich and poor.

The most outrageous part of this scam is that over $70 billion per year is being paid to foreigners in order to get our own trade deficit dollars back. If that $70 billion of interest were retained in our country and applied against future obligations to Social Security and Medicare recipients, the worries about the solvency of those programs would disappear overnight.

The prudent use of the projected federal budget surpluses could also reduce the interest burden on the American taxpayer. The projected surpluses may simply be "smoke and mirrors," caused either by windfall tax revenues created by record capital gains in an unsustainable stock market or by temporary surpluses in Social Security that will have to be paid out in a few years. Still, let's assume that the surpluses do materialize. What should be done with them?

There is strong pressure in Congress to "give the money back to the American taxpayers" through various tax cuts. But there is a heavy dose of demagoguery in such proposals, political posturing to gain voter support in upcoming elections. Furthermore, the proposed tax cuts offer little benefit to those most in need—the working and middle classes. But they provide a double benefit to the rich: While their taxes are reduced, the wealth-transfer mechanism of the federal debt is left intact.

The working and middle classes would benefit more if all budget surpluses were applied against the federal debt until it is completely eliminated. In addition to saving the average household about $2,000 per year in taxes, elimination of the debt would avoid a massive drain on our capital resources. Mortgage rates, interest on car loans, credit cards, etc., would fall drastically. These lower interest rates would save American homeowners and consumers thousands of dollars a year.

Such a plan would be a blessing for the average American and for our entire social and economic order: It would inflict a mortal wound on a devious scheme that transfers a good part of the meager wealth of the poor and the middle class to the ten percent who already own or control 90 percent of our private wealth. It would stop the widening polarization of our society. It would liberate average cit-

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izens from servitude to the financial elite. Surely these benefits far exceed any that might result from the tax cuts currently proposed by Congress. But don't hold your breath: Our "representatives" don't really want to reduce the national debt, because it means easy money to their cronies in the financial world—people like my friend Jack!

I am a capitalist by virtue of many years as a top executive in American's largest corporation, General Motors, with responsibility for the capitalization, profitability, and market penetration of thousands of dealers from San Francisco to Boston. Having "been there," I know that the end products of capital (profits, interest, dividends, and capital gains) are made possible only by people who work to produce the goods and services we all want. Those who control capital should never assume that they are the "be-all and end-all."

History tells us that when capitalists presume they have a right to control money supplies and to exact unwarranted interest payments from the general populace, the people will rise up in protest, even to the point of physical rebellion. Paying down the debt may be the best way for our political elite to avoid a repeat of 1776!

Gus R. Stelzer, a former senior executive at General Motors, is the author of The Nightmare of Camelot: An Exposé of the Free Trade Trojan Horse.

LAW

Thinking About Internment

by John Derbyshire

I am going to ask what Churchill would have called some naughty questions, and offer some impertinent answers. I apologize in advance for the extreme political incorrectness of what follows. In the hope of persuading the reader that I raise these issues with no pleasure at all, I shall preface them with some personal notes. I am a British citizen, lawfully resident in the United States. I became eligible to apply for naturalization six months ago, but have not yet done so—partly from sloth, partly from a dislike of dealing with government agencies, partly from a lingering sentimental attachment to my own country. My wife—who *has* applied for naturalization—is a citizen of mainland China; her father is a member of the Chinese Communist Party. Our two children are, as they are already tired of being told, half English coal miner, half Chinese peasant, 100 percent American. Most of our friends (along with my current boss, and three of the people who report to me) are mainland Chinese or Taiwanese.

Now let us proceed. The questions I want to address are: In the increasingly *thinkable* event of a war between China and the United States, what can be said about the loyalties of (a) Chinese nationals in the United States, (b) Taiwanese nationals in the United States, and (c) people of the Chinese race (I am translating here precisely from the commonplace Chinese term *han-zu*) born and raised in the United States? Supposing it can fairly be said that some of those loyalties are doubtful, how should a responsible war-time government act? Which is of course equivalent to asking: How should a responsible peacetime government plan to act?

In the first place, I do not think it at all improper to pose questions of this sort, though I have no doubt many people do so think and that I shall meet heavy criticism for having posed them. War is a fierce and desperate business. At the least, it is a matter of national prestige; at most, it is a matter of national survival. War between two nations with nuclear arsenals must always, I think, be regarded as in the "at most" category. In such a situation, you do what you have to do, while trying to hold on to as much decency and legality as you can spare.

The reasons why these questions are particularly acute in respect of the Chinese are, I think, fairly widely known. Modern war is very technological. You need good soldiers, of course; but you also need good engineers, physicists, chemists, mathematicians, computer scientists, and—horrible to say, but surely true—biologists. In the United States today, Chinese nationals, Taiwanese nationals, and ABCs (that is, American-born Chinese) are massively overrepresented in these disciplines. In many fields, they dominate. An acquaintance who studied advanced physics at Florida Atlantic University tells me that the other two graduate students in her department were both mainland Chinese (and, incidentally, that both of them were funded by the U.S. taxpayer, via grants mainly from the Departments of Energy and Defense). In the event of a Sino-American war—and assuming that war lasted longer than the flight times of two ICBM barrages—these researchers would pose an acute problem for the authorities.

I myself live just four miles from Cold Spring Harbor lab, a major center of research in microbiology and genetics. My wife is an outgoing sort and makes friends with other Chinese people when she can—people she meets at mothers' groups, play groups, the library, and the supermarket. Most of them turn out to be, or to be married to, researchers at Cold Spring Harbor. Last summer, we were invited to a picnic there (the lab has extensive grounds and is beautifully located on Long Island's north shore). Practically the only language in evidence at the picnic was Mandarin. I would estimate that at least 60 percent of the participants—researchers and their families—were Chinese. The situation is the same at other labs—even those doing defense work. Where do the loyalties of these researchers lie?

So far as mainland nationals are concerned—including the tens of thousands working in government labs, or pursuing graduate studies on government grants—I think it can be said with fair certainty that practically all would favor a Chinese victory. Why should anyone think otherwise? Who would expect foreign nationals to support their host country over their homeland? Probing among Chinese colleagues and friends, I find zero spiritual attachment to America. As one of them put it: "America is not really a country. It's just a place people come to from all over to have a good life." Many of the Chinese would probably try to return to China—though a U.S. government at war would be foolish to allow them to do so, or to remain in their posts. Internment would be the only option. Chinese nationals who have taken U.S. citizenship should also be regarded as security risks. This sounds very shocking, of course. As citizens, do they not have the same rights as all other citizens, with the single exception specified in the Constitution? Well, yes; but what is one to think of a Chinese national like John Huang, President Clinton's favorite fundraiser, who, after becoming naturalized, maintains close business and per-

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sonal links with front companies for the Chinese military and intelligence communities? And what is one to do with such a person in the event of a war with China? To put the issue somewhat differently: Suppose you were running Chinese intelligence and wished to plant a network of "sleepers" around the United States. For really effective cover, would it not be smart to have them apply for citizenship as soon as they were eligible? Does anyone believe the Chinese Communist Party incapable of such a thing?

If you start asking these kinds of questions, someone soon raises the issue of the internment of Japanese-Americans in World War II. This is generally regarded as a very disgraceful episode—the U.S. government interning U.S. citizens for reasons suspiciously racist (German-Americans and Italian-Americans were not interned in anything like such numbers, although many were interned). I must say, I have never thought it was a very deplorable thing to do. All those interned, including those with U.S. citizenship, were Japanese citizens (at that time, Japanese automatically inherited citizenship from their fathers). Only Japanese-Americans in likely infiltration areas were interned: Those in New York, Nebraska, and Hawaii(!) were not. Japan had attacked U.S. territory; Germany and Italy had not. The camps were rather comfortable—they contained beauty parlors, for example, and in at least one case, a Kabuki theater—and were visited by all the major news organizations of the time. Some Japanese-Americans were given the choice of returning to Japan, and did so. The Japanese authorities regarded them with deep suspicion and put them to forced labor in concentration camps.

The interned Japanese-Americans argue that they were not security threats. I am sure that most of them were not; I am equally sure that some of them were. A friend currently teaching at a Japanese university tells me that the phrase *nihon ga kateba ii*—"I hope Japan wins"—was commonly heard among older Japanese-Americans at the time.

I have spoken only of mainland Chinese people living in this country. The Taiwanese are a special case, the more so because the most probable cause of a war between China and the United States would be a Chinese attack on, or blockade of, Taiwan. My impression is that under this or any other *casus belli*, most Taiwanese would support America. Many native Taiwanese dislike mainlanders in general. (I know one who objects to being called Chinese: "I am *not* Chinese, I am Taiwanese.") Descendants of those mainlanders who came to the island in Chiang Kai-shek's baggage train still fear and hate the Communists. It is, after all, Chiang's wife who owns the distinction of being the first person of importance in any nation to call for the use of nuclear weapons against her own countrymen.

What of those who call themselves "Chinese-Americans"— members of the Chinese race who were born here and passed through the American educational system? All those classes on "multiculturalism" and "diversity" they must have sat through: What lesson did they take from them? That their first loyalty is to their ethnic group? What, then, is their second loyalty? To their country of citizenship? Or to the homeland of their ethnic group? The situation is not improved by the fact of ABCs being overrepresented in colleges and universities (a state of affairs that becomes even more pronounced as affirmative action in col-

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Of Pigeons and Pyracanthas

by Constance Rowell Mastores

The dusty hedge outside the Safeway
bursts with pigeons. It bends beneath
their weight. Some disappear within
the tangled web. Some hang upside

down and foist their eye on me as
they pick and plunder—upset, perhaps,
that I have caught them in the act—
the berries not yet ripe. A terse,

unsucculent lot. More like a scourge
than a feast. Why not let them ripen?
Ferment a little? *Then* have a party?
Are they an antidote for months

of junk food? A purgative? A rite
of passage? Although I do confess
the birds look lovely on the hedge
(or vice-versa) fooling around

for berries. You wish that you could join
them there—for whatever joy they get.
For when they strut about on asphalt,
you see them all too clearly. Messy

and vainglorious. Without a trace
of humor. They're best on pyracanthas
later in the season. Interjecting
love pecks between the pecks of berries.

Beside themselves with the good things
in life. Boozy. All charged-up.
As we used to get—before we grew
correct—at the yearly office party.

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lege admissions is outlawed). Our institutes of higher education are the engine-rooms of the multicultural enterprise. Four years at the average university is, as a survey by *National Review* has found, a most effective way to turn young Americans against their country, its history, and traditions. Is it unreasonable to suppose that for some proportion of these people—five percent? twenty?—racial loyalty will trump national allegiance?

(Once you start thinking about this stuff, even stranger and more daunting dilemmas present themselves. Suppose, for example, that a great power were to come up in black Africa. There is nothing very improbable about such a development. That continent has the highest rates of population growth in the world, by far the lowest labor costs, and more than its share of natural resources. All that is missing is an organizing principle; but organizing principles have often appeared suddenly out of nowhere, turning the most unlikely places into centers of historical dynamism—think of the rise of Islam. A militant and vigorous African power is not more unlikely now than the rise of Japan was in 1850, or that of China in 1950. Suppose, then, that such a power came into being, and suppose its interests clashed violently with those of the United States. Where would black Americans stand in such a conflict? The doctrines of—to borrow a useful phrase from Peter Salins' *Assimilation, American Style*—"ethnic federalism" that are now universal among our policy elites may seem like an interesting experiment in peacetime. In time of war, they may prove fatal.)

However shocking the things I am saying here may seem in this long tranquil time, I guarantee that, when the first U.S. carrier is sunk by Chinese action or the first American city is erased by a Chinese ICBM, Chinese nationals, including those who are U.S. citizens, will be hustled into camps faster than you can say "executive order" and will stay there for the duration, whatever the ACLU—or even the Supreme Court—thinks about it. I hope the camps will not be very uncomfortable, for I shall be there, too—we Derbyshires travel as a family. I also hope that I shall be able to maintain sufficient detachment to understand that a responsible U.S. government really has no choice in the matter.

John Derbyshire is the author of the novel Seeing Calvin Coolidge in a Dream.

The Constitution: Hate Crimes' Latest Victim

by William J. Watkins, Jr.

New federal hate-crimes legislation is on the way. Never one to miss an opportunity to expands its powers, the national government has capitalized on a perceived rash of hate crimes in order to increase federal jurisdiction, and the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999 (HCPA) will probably become law in the near future.

When confronted with such legislation in the past, the federal courts mindlessly declared that Congress had a rational basis for enacting the law pursuant to the power to regulate commerce. But in light of *United States* v. *Lopez*, which struck down a federal law (based on the Commerce Clause) that criminalized possession of a firearm near schools, courts are paying more attention to the forgotten concept of federalism. Just before the new hate-crimes act was introduced, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit struck down, in *Brzonkala* v. *Virginia Polytechnic Institute*, a portion of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which greatly resembles the HCPA, as an unconstitutional exercise of Congress's power to regulate commerce and enforce the 14th Amendment. The VAWA, in part, declared that "[a]ll persons within the United States shall have the right to be free from crimes of violence motivated by gender," and created a private cause of action against individuals committing such a crime.

In *Brzonkala*, a female student at Virginia Tech brought suit against two football players who allegedly gang-raped her because of "gender animus." The United States intervened in the suit to defend the constitutionality of the VAWA. The government argued that the statute was constitutional based on two grounds: the enforcement clause of the 14th Amendment and the Commerce Clause. The 14th Amendment provides, in pertinent part, that "[n]o State shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Because the amendment refers only to state action, it is a well-settled principle of American constitutional law that Congress cannot reach private conduct by using the 14th Amendment. As the Fourth Circuit observed, the VAWA "unmistakably regulates private action; it creates a cause of action against private individuals who commit acts of gender-motivated violence." Moreover, the court found the VAWA—drafted in broad and sweeping terms—was not closely tailored to remedy the supposed violation of the 14th Amendment. Not wishing to "confer upon Congress a general police power," the court declared that the VAWA's private cause of action exceeded Congress's power to enforce the amendment.

The Fourth Circuit's Commerce Clause analysis is especially interesting since it supplies *Lopez* with the bite truly to limit Congress's use of the commerce power. Though *Lopez*'s analysis was heralded by many as revolutionary, others realized that the landmark decision left the Supreme Court's most expansive interpretations of the Commerce Clause in place. Justice Clarence Thomas, in his concurring opinion in *Lopez*, went so far as to accuse the majority of giving Congress a general police power over all aspects of day-to-day life. Moreover, the majority hinted that the Gun-Free School Zones Act might have been viewed more favorably by the Court had Congress merely conducted hearings regarding the effect of gun possession in a school zone on interstate commerce.

In defending the VAWA, the government used many of the same arguments that failed in *Lopez*. It essentially claimed that violence against women is a devastating social ill which affects the national economy—increased medical and legal costs are imposed on victims; women are discouraged from traveling and transacting business in public places; and women become less productive because of their constant fear of violence. The Fourth Circuit began by noting the obvious: The VAWA is a criminal statute and does not regulate economic activity. The court recognized that to adopt the federal government's understanding of the power to regulate commerce:

> would be to extend federal control to a vast range of problems falling within even the most traditional areas of state concern—problems such as violent crime generally, educational shortcomings, and even divorce, all of which are significant and as a result unquestionably affect the economy and ultimately interstate commerce.

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As for congressional findings that violence against women affects the economy, the Fourth Circuit refused to give them "absolute deference." In the end, federalism carried the day, as the right to be free from "gender animus" and the accompanying private cause of action were struck down.

The Supreme Court has already granted *certiorari* and will soon be reviewing *Brzonkala*. If upheld, as it should be, it will mean the demise of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999, which is the child of Sen. Edward Kennedy and the usual congressional suspects.

The dragging death of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas, and the robbery-turned-murder of Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming, provided much of the impetus behind the proposed hate-crimes legislation. Almost every supporter of the HCPA explicitly referred to the incidents. President Clinton described the deaths as teaching "us how easily prejudice can erupt into violence." Janet Reno remarked that they "show once again that we [the federal government] must do more to fight hate crimes in America." Byrd's daughter, while participating in a news conference with Senator Kennedy, applauded the HCPA because, under the legislation, perpetrators of hate crimes "will pay the price." These supporters of the HCPA completely ignored the fact that the murderers of Byrd and Shepard were rapidly brought to justice by state law enforcement officials. Byrd's killer was sentenced to death, and Shepard's killer received two consecutive life terms. How federal law will extract a higher price is unclear. The judicial systems of the several states, accounting for 95 percent of all prosecutions nationwide, are still capable of bringing lawbreakers to justice, as they have since the colonial era.

In offering her support for an earlier version of Kennedy's legislation, former Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun described hate crimes as "especially troubling" because they:

> send a message to all members of a community that they are not free to walk the streets, to own property, or to enjoy their fundamental rights as Americans simply because of how they look or what they believe.

But whether a crime is motivated by hate or not, members of a community are apt to feel that their lives, liberties, and properties are less secure than before. A sane society would realize that criminal action itself is an evil, whether the motivation is prejudice or rapacity.

Perhaps the most disturbing remarks in favor of Kennedy's legislation came from Sen. John F. Kerry. Kerry averred that "true citizenship belongs only to an enlightened people, undeterred by passion or prejudice—and it exists in a country which recognizes no one particular aspect of humanity before another." Kerry's message is clear. The unenlightened of society—those who disapprove of certain lifestyles or habits—cannot be true citizens. The Christian who teaches his children that homosexuality is against God's Commandments is lumped together with the criminal who murders a man because of his sexual preference.

Senator Kennedy's HCPA differs markedly from current federal hate-crimes legislation. Current law prohibits interference with six specifically enumerated federally protected activities on the basis of a person's race, color, religion, or national origin. The activities are: enrolling or attending a public school or college; participating in services or activities provided by state or local government; applying for or holding a job; serving as a juror in state court; traveling; and enjoying public accommodations.

The HCPA adds a provision to current law prohibiting intentional infliction of bodily injury (using fire, a firearm, or explosive device) based on the victim's race, color, religion, or national origin. To fall under this provision, the victim need not be participating in a federally protected activity.

Similarly, another provision prohibits intentional infliction of injury using fire, a firearm, or explosive device based on the victim's gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Again, the victim need not be participating in a protected activity, but the offense must affect "interstate or foreign commerce."

Under both new provisions, only felonies may be prosecuted, and the Justice Department must certify that "a prosecution by the United States is in the public interest and necessary to secure substantial justice."

Like the VAWA, the proposed hate-crimes statute contains a number of findings. The HCPA claims that hate-crimes affect interstate commerce "by impeding the movement of members of targeted groups and forcing such members to move across state lines to escape . . . violence," and "by preventing members of targeted groups from purchasing goods and services, obtaining or sustaining employment or participating in other commercial activity."

The government is abusing its power to regulate commerce in order to enact a criminal statute. According to Alexander Hamilton in *Federalist* 17, "the ordinary administration of criminal and civil justice" under the Constitution is "the province of the State governments." Nevertheless, Senator Kennedy's response is that "[w]e must stop acting like we don't care—that somehow this fundamental issue is just a state problem. It isn't. It's a national problem."

Of course, following the logic of the HCPA, all criminal conduct could be a "national problem" that substantially affects interstate commerce. The Supreme Court rejected this approach in *Lopez*, and the Fourth Circuit followed suit in *Brzonkala*. If *Brzonkala* is upheld by the high court, the provisions of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act regarding gender, homosexuality, and disability will enjoy a quick death. If the Violence Against Women Act exceeds Congress's powers, then surely the HCPA provisions also exceed the scope of the Commerce Clause.

Critics will undoubtedly describe the HCPA as a victim of modern judicial activism. It is not. As St. George Tucker explained:

> every grant of jurisdiction to the [federal government] . . . is to be considered as special, inasmuch as it derogates from the antecedent rights and jurisdiction of the state making the concession, and therefore ought to be construed strictly.

Strict construction of the federal government's powers should be the rule of constitutional interpretation rather than the exception. Though we are far from the implementation of Tucker's maxim, the Court appears to be moving slowly in the right direction. The anticipated demise of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act will be but a small step toward a reasonable interpretation of the Commerce Clause and the restoration of the state governments to their proper place in the federal system.

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FILM

Of Guns and Roses

by George McCartney

Three Kings

Produced by Village Roadshow Productions, Atlas Entertainment, and Warner Bros.
Directed by David O. Russell
Screenplay by John Ridley and David O. Russell
Released by Warner Bros.

American Beauty

Produced by DreamWorks and Jinks/Cohen
Directed by Sam Mendes
Screenplay by Alan Ball
Released by DreamWorks

Set against the aftermath of the Gulf War in March 1991, David O. Russell's *Three Kings* includes a disturbing scene in which an officer explains to his men what's most dangerous about a bullet wound. Provided you survive the initial impact, he coolly observes, it's what happens inside. As he speaks, the screen fills with a cutaway view of a chest cavity, exposing lungs, heart, stomach, and liver, all blithely working away. Suddenly, a bullet pierces the rib cage, puncturing this and that on its erratic course until it bursts into the liver, letting loose a viscous green syrup. Bile, the officer explains. Together with internal bleeding, it will fill the chest cavity, compressing the lungs until it's difficult, if not impossible, to breathe.

Russell so delights in this grisly living diagram, he repeats it near the end of the film. One can see why. It speaks eloquently of his overall ballistic strategy. He wants his film to have the impact of a bullet, first bowling us over, taking our breath away, and finally leaving us with some troubling internal pressure when the lights go up. Accordingly, the first 40 minutes come at us with the force of a gunshot. We are assaulted by a swift, nonstop montage filled with rapid-fire camera panning that looks confused yet manages to deliver all we need to know to follow the plot.

We're first introduced to three naive reservists, played by Mark Wahlberg, Ice Cube, and Spike Jonze, all surprisingly effective. Then we meet Special Forces Major Archie Gates—George Clooney in a commanding portrayal of a war-hardened soldier made cynical by his government's addiction to military half-measures such as those employed in the Gulf War. With his organ-voiced insouciance, Clooney perfectly captures the curdled resentment of an officer whose competency has been gallingly leashed by the dictates of *realpolitik*.

Gates is a man shorn of his professional mission. So when a treasure map is retrieved gingerly from the backside of an Iraqi POW, he decides to pursue a personal challenge instead. The document identifies the village where Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard has hidden millions in Kuwaiti gold bullion. Before you can say "the Mother of All Wars," Gates is tearing across the Iraqi desert in a "borrowed" Humvee, reservists in tow. Visions of Lexuses and Infinities dance in their heads as one of the younger men sings in comic blasphemy a medley from the Christmas hymnal and Janis Joplin: "We three kings be stealing the gold; my friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends." It will be an easy operation, Gates has assured them. Out at dawn, back by lunch, and they'll never have to report to their day jobs again.

But when they arrive at the village, their larcenous adventure begins to sour. They find the people in a state of pandemonium. Men, women, and children run toward them from every direction. They're all smiling, gesturing, and chattering inexplicably. The remorseless desert sun adds to the confusion by bleaching the scene until it's blindingly monochromatic. The few colors that do break through are so intense and the action so hectic, they smear the screen unintelligibly. Russell's handheld cameras take it all in with seemingly random sweeps—right, left, up, down—until we're as thoroughly discombobulated as Gates and his men. Squinting painfully against the desert glare, the Americans find themselves bewildered by this riot of wogs. Only slowly do they begin to sort things out. Uniformed Iraqis begin to emerge from the perimeters of the village square. Other men without uniforms now appear, hunkering on rooftops.

Then, ignoring the Americans, the soldiers rush forward at the sight of an approaching tanker truck. "Nothing comes in," they shout repeatedly, firing on the vehicle until the driver loses control and it turns over, spilling its cargo of milk, thousands of gallons worth, unleashing a white tidal wave that sweeps the villagers and the Americans off their feet. Mothers and children scramble frantically to scoop up as much of the life-sustaining liquid as possible before it seeps uselessly into the sand.

Amid this chaos, the picture comes into focus. These villagers are being starved, bullied, and tortured into submission by Saddam's soldiers. They thought the Americans had come to defend them, a belief perversely reinforced by Gates, who reads them a statement supposedly from George Bush filled with official blather about America's commitment to the people of Iraq. Having paid lip service to diplomacy, the Americans then do their best to ignore these unfortunates as they kick down doors and threaten their way into the soldiers' underground quarters in search of the Kuwaiti gold.

The entire sequence distills the Gulf War to its tawdry essentials. We invaded Iraq ostensibly to drive Saddam Hussein from power and thus protect Kuwait and the Iraqi people from his ruthless ambitions. But our real reasons were quite different. We were there to stop Saddam from blocking our access to the region's oil supplies. Once this was accomplished, we pulled out, abandoning Iraqi civilians to Saddam's savagery and ourselves to possible terrorist attacks. It was another of those shameful adventures in which our government asks Americans to risk their lives for a policy so prudently limited that it leaves the situation it would remedy as bad or worse than before. Think Kosovo.

So far, so cynical. But then Russell surprises us. As the Americans are about to make their getaway, a woman held at gunpoint by a member of the Republican Guard begs them to stay. When she refuses to stop her clamor, the soldier kills her in front of her daughter and husband. With this, the soundtrack goes dead. Then we hear winds sighing as the clouds overhead speed weirdly across a seemingly limitless powder-blue sky. Next we see the woman falling again and again, filmed from several angles in languid slow motion. Finally, her body lands with a gracefully undulant bounce, breaking the grim spell. We hear the unnerving wail of the woman's daughter as

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she rushes to the body, her father trying desperately to restrain the child lest she be shot also. This stretching of time is, of course, an old film device. Eisenstein used it powerfully in 1925 to give *Potemkin* its emotional resonance. But Russell has executed it so masterfully that it feels utterly new and deeply moving. We watch this horror through Gates' eyes and can feel his cynicism crack under the pressure of conscience. Before this moment, his hard, piercing gaze looked straight ahead, seeing only what concerned him. Now his eyes widen and soften ever so slightly, taking in the awful spectacle before him. Then he winces as his heart overrules his practical judgment. He can't drive away from this.

What follows is best left unsaid. I only want to mention how Russell visually manages the cross-cultural encounter between Americans and Iraqis. For the first half of the film, his washed out, jittery photography deliberately prevents us from seeing the Iraqis as individuals. They all blend together as the undifferentiated alien. But later, in an underground shelter's darkened interior, shot with a steadied camera, they become identifiable persons. Many speak English. Several have lived in America. The leader of the resistance solemnly announces, "I was at B school in Bowling Green." Rather than the towel heads and camel jockeys of GI argot, the dissident villagers turn out to be ordinary people united in their hatred of tyranny and fervent in their longing for something resembling American freedom.

How the Americans respond to this knowledge becomes the moral burden of this remarkable film. Will the four kings of the Occident have the nobility of those other kings, the three from the Orient who 2,000 years ago came bearing gifts rather than stealing them, those good wise men who risked themselves to help another Middle Eastern family escape a similarly vicious tyrant? The film puts this question not only to the protagonists but also to us in the audience, should we care to address it. This is the wound and the pressure Russell wants us to feel as we leave the theater.

Sam Mendes also raises important questions in *American Beauty*. Unfortunately, he tries to answer them.

We meet Lester Burnham, 42 years old, no visible scars, only internal. He's done a 20-year stint in the soul-crushing middle class during which he's actually had to *work* at an unsatisfying job to support his one-child family. "It feels like I've been in a coma," he tells us. In desperate need of inspiration, he fantasizes about Angela (Mena Suvari), his 17-year-old daughter's friend. He imagines her provocatively unzipping her sweater to reveal mounds of rose petals which fly out and tantalizingly fill the air between them. In a film so remarkably appointed with roses, this scene is clearly the centerpiece. It identifies the aptly named Angela as Lester's personal Beatrice, sent to lead him from the dark wood of his aimless life to the luminous multifoliate rose of some secular beatification.

But first, Mendes takes us on a Dantesque tour of the American middle class, revealing it to be an inferno of avarice, treachery, fear, lust, and self-loathing. At moments, he succeeds with some strikingly original images, but in the long run he hasn't the vision—aesthetic or moral—to sustain his conceit.

Burnham's particular hell is his marriage. He is disgusted with the shallow ethic of success that drives his realtor wife, Carolyn (Annette Bening), a woman so committed to appearances that she color-coordinates her clogs with her gardening shears and smiles tirelessly for fear the world may think she is not unwaveringly happy. "My business is selling an image," she explains, "and part of it is living that image." Her happy face stops well short of the marital bed, however, which is why poor Lester lusts after the nubile Angela. Meanwhile, their sullen daughter (Thora Birch) concludes they're both freaks.

The traditional family makes a poor showing here. Consider Lester's neighbors. On the right, we find a home possessed of guns, paranoia, homophobic hysteria, voyeurism, and—worst of all—a penchant for Ronald Reagan films. On the left, we find exemplary decency and inexhaustible reserves of sweetness and light. Here's the zinger. The rightward ranch quarters a retired Marine colonel, his emotionally lobotomized wife, and their voyeur son, while the leftward hacienda is home to an unfailingly charming homosexual couple.

Maybe Mendes thinks this is flattering to homosexuals, but among those I count as my friends, I don't know any who enjoy being used as agitprop to travesty the traditional family. Mendes's aim is clearly to expose the family as the front of repression, hypocrisy, and self-deception, an institution that perverts our better selves.

What is our better self? Lester finds his through the guidance of an adolescent Virgil (Wes Bentley) who sells him pot while giving him lessons in living for the moment. He's so taken with the lad's do-as-you-will free spirit that he gushes, "You've become my personal hero." So this is the answer! Forget those dreary middle-class blues and follow the natural wisdom of untutored youth. Liberation through sex, drugs, and rock and roll!

My, how salvation has changed since Dante sought the rose of paradise. That this film is both a critical and popular success reveals how many of us remain lost in the darker woods of America.

George McCartney teaches English at St. John's University.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Banking on Boris—Part II

by Sergey Berdyaev

The news for both the "Father of Russian Democracy" and his "friend Bill" was equally bad in the second week of September. A wave of bombings had killed some 300 Russians, murdered by an elusive terrorist gang as they slept in their beds (with some people pointing an accusing finger at the Kremlin; see "Banking on Boris" in the December 1999 *Chronicles*). The war against Islamic militants in the North Caucasus was dragging on, and the Swiss investigation into the Mabetex scandal was uncovering evidence of links with the Bank of New York (BNY) money-laundering scandal. Meanwhile, back in Washington, Congress was preparing for hearings on the BNY case, which President Clinton's opponents are sure to use as a pretext for an embarrassing "Who lost Russia?" political bash, while Clinton's anointed successor, Al Gore, was in deep trouble, with polls showing presidential wannabes George W. Bush and Bill Bradley both thumping him. Thus, the two beleaguered presidents had occasion to talk over their misfortunes and, perhaps, engage in the blame game, both seeing the other as the source of his own domestic

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problems.

The Russian press had a field day with Boris Yeltsin's September 9 conversation with Clinton on the Kremlin hotline. The Kremlin's walls were gushing with leaks: Reportedly, the main topics of conversation were the interconnected BNY and Mabetex scandals. Yeltsin and his entourage, the "family," stand accused of accepting kickbacks for Kremlin refurbishment contracts from shady Kosovo Albanian Begzhet Paccoli. According to media accounts, Paccoli provided the "family" with credit cards having a generous credit line, which he paid. He also set up Swiss accounts for the "family" into which Russian budget funds—and IMF funds—were allegedly funneled. According to Russian newspapers, Clinton asked Yeltsin if he had accepted bribes, and Yeltsin reportedly beat around the birch tree, not denying the charges, but complaining that the whole scandal was "politically inspired." What he meant was that Washington's political allergy to the Clintons was causing Yeltsin problems. Clinton, according to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*'s informants, was "not completely satisfied" with Yeltsin's halfhearted denials.

Judging from subsequent events, Clinton and Yeltsin probably had a serious—and acrimonious—discussion about how to counter the rising tide of political sewage that threatens to drown them both. Clinton had already kicked off the campaign by having his national security advisor, Sandy Berger, downplay the Russian corruption stories in the September 5 *Washington Post*. In banal bureaucratese, Berger admitted that there are "many problems in Russia today" and needled Yeltsin for vetoing an anti-money-laundering bill passed by the Duma. But he also repeated a claim made by Moscow apparatchiks and IMF spokesmen: "We have no evidence that IMF funds have been stolen." Berger called for Russian cooperation in investigating the BNY scandal, something Yeltsin pledged four days later during his talk with Clinton. The very next day, September 10, Yeltsin gave his law enforcement chiefs a serious tongue-lashing, telling them he was shocked, *shocked*, that they had not followed through with Russian pledges to join the International Commission Against Money Laundering. Yeltsin demanded that the Duma pass enabling legislation sanctioning Russian participation in the European Conventions on Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance. Furthermore, Yeltsin ordered a team of Russian security personnel to fly to Washington to facilitate the American investigation of the BNY scandal, preferably before the kick-off of congressional hearings set for late September, which roughly coincided (coincidentally, no doubt) with the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank. Russian Central Bank (RCB) Chairman Viktor Gerashchenko and Russian Finance Ministry officials would also be on hand to negotiate the release of the next $640 million "tranche" of the IMF "stabilization credit" to Russia, which they hoped to get by October 10.

It looks like the plan for covering the political hindquarters of the Clinton administration and the Kremlin "family" goes something like this: first, continue denying that any IMF funds were "diverted" and have Price Waterhouse Coopers audit the RCB. (Of course, the RCB's books are cooked to well done, as anybody who has followed reporting on questionable RCB economic data could surmise; Russian and European media have often claimed that official RCB figures for currency and gold reserves—figures used by creditors to help determine Russian creditworthiness—are entirely fictional, and the RCB itself has admitted it used its reserves to speculate on the collapse of the ruble in August 1998. The profits were funneled offshore via RCB affiliates.) Next, demand quarterly reports from the RCB on its financial state; of course, the Russians will protest a bit over this intrusion. (Gerashchenko has called the demands for quarterly reports "nonsense.") Then, after delaying the release of the "tranche"—now postponed until at least October 20—in a show of Washington's tough love for Moscow, send it along in due time. In the meantime, send a delegation of Russian Duma deputies to take part in the Capitol Hill show trial orchestrated by House Banking Committee Chairman Jim Leach (R-IA), while the IMF and World Bank spokesmen keep repeating how important it is to remain "engaged" with Moscow. Former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and his successor, Lawrence Summers, the IMF's Michel Camdessu, and the World Bank's James Wolfensohn have all stressed this last point. Camdessu hailed Russian reforms and economic progress (!) and stated that the IMF's next "tranche" would shortly be approved, while Wolfensohn characterized the reporting on the Kremlin scandals as "hysterical."

For all that, the Clinton and Yeltsin sham "investigation" has faltered, the victim of carefully timed leaks from Swiss, Russian, and American law enforcement and security agencies. As October begins, Russian, American, and European media have reported that Russian investigators, confronted with "irrefutable" evidence of Russian money laundering (including evidence of RCB involvement in the possible "diversion" of IMF funds), refused to hand over materials requested by the Americans to facilitate the investigation. Swiss investigators have frozen the accounts of numerous Russians—including tens of millions of dollars in accounts held by Yeltsin's Rasputin, "financier" Boris Berezovsky—who may be connected to the Russian mafia's money-laundering operations, which could include IMF funds as well as money made through the drug trade, prostitution, and other illicit activities. The Italian paper *Corrierre della Sera*, which has taken the lead in exposing the Kremlin's Mabetex connection, reported that Swiss investigators complain of Moscow's attempts to block their investigation, which reportedly has linked alleged Mabetex and RCB money laundering to the BNY. Tatyana Dyachenko, Yeltsin's daughter and *de facto* chief of staff, has been tied to the BNY scandal via her husband, who has a hefty account in an offshore BNY affiliate.

The litany of leaks appears to undermine the Clinton-Yeltsin effort to whitewash the scandal; what comes next is anybody's guess. But we poor taxpayers, suffering from an overdose of Clinton/Yeltsin fatigue, will probably not see any serious effort by either the Washington or Moscow "party of power" to question, much less halt, the dubious IMF/World Bank gravy train. The game will likely go on.

Sergey Berdyaev is a journalist who covers the former Soviet Union.

When in Rockford

Eat at

Lee's Chinese Restaurant

3443 N. Main Street

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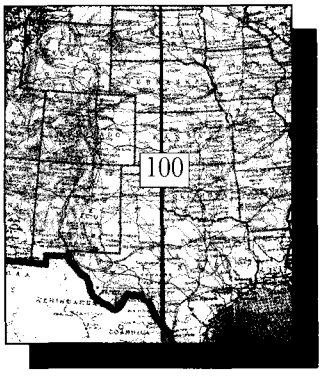
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.



The Cowboy Reservation

At the kickoff of fall semester last year, the University of Wyoming hosted a conference attended by James Watt, Pete Simpson (the brother of former Senator Alan Simpson), and Kathy Karpan (an unsuccessful candidate for both governor *and* U.S. senator), among other notables and celebrities, to discuss the state's supposedly dismal economic and social future. Having five tons of hay from Elk Mountain to offload and stack in West Laramie, I failed to attend, while observing a skinhead in a pinstripe suit and paisley tie who looked suspiciously like former indicted Cabinet Secretary Watt waiting on the corner of Grand Avenue and Thirteenth Street (if bureaucrats were distinctive, easily recognizable individuals, they wouldn't be bureaucrats). However, David Broder flew all the way from Washington, D.C., to be present and write up his impressions of the meeting, to which he devoted the column I read next morning in the *Denver Post*.

As conveyed by Broder, at least, the mood of the meeting was one of frustrated optimism on the surface and pessimistic frustration beneath: a string of dissonant notes sounding as outmoded as the 12-tone scale, as jarring in the era of the Clinton Prosperity as a razzing editorial by Mencken during the Coolidge one. Wyoming in 1999 is not (in certain ways) the Wyoming of 1979 when I arrived at the height of the energy boom and went to work in the oil patch, sure enough. Twenty years ago, the population had risen to 575,000 from 240,000 only a decade or so before; today, it is somewhere between 460,000 and 480,000. The boom has been over for 15 years, though energy extraction by the big international corporations proceeds apace, and towns that had—or thought they had—an easy shot at the Big Time long ago lowered their sights and resigned themselves to Main Street. Beef prices are down, wool is lower than the President's pants, ranchers are going broke and selling out to fabulously wealthy non-Westerners who don't know one end of a cow from the other and expect roosters to lay eggs, while in Jackson, Sheridan, and Saratoga, people show themselves in public in Land's End, L.L. Bean, Patagonia, and Izod without a trace of shame. About half of graduating seniors, high school and college, leave the state to find work, for the reason (the conference assumed) that there are no jobs in Wyoming for young people who do not wish to be miners or oilfield roughnecks and who were not born on a ranch. Often, they migrate no farther than adjacent Colorado or Utah, both of which have booming economies, while others move as far away as Arizona and California. (Montana, a haven for movie stars and militiamen, isn't seen as much of an improvement.)

To judge from Broder's account, the university meeting was sourly preoccupied by the economic success of Wyoming's neighbors, especially in comparison with the flatness of its own economy. To account for this differential, speakers advanced several explanations, among them the relative ineffectuality of Wyoming's state politicians and its congressional delegation, the superiority of Utah's and Colorado's educational systems, and the hostility of the state's business establishment to new industry and the penetration of outside economic influence. Wyoming's nickname ("The Cowboy State") and its official logo, the bronc rider emblazoned on Wyoming license plates and elsewhere, received special attention for allegedly reinforcing "stereotypes" of the state as the land of rednecks, horses' asses, and homophobia. (Matthew Shepard loomed large in the university's collective consciousness last fall, as the anniversary of the killing in Laramie approached.) If anyone thought to mention inhospitable climate as a handicap in the competition for industry, jobs, and population, Broder didn't report the fact. It's a peculiar omission, Wyoming being more notorious even for its weather than for its armed beefeaters, its lack of economic "infrastructure," and its restricted pool of docile industrial slaves. For 150 years, beginning with the opening of the Oregon Trail, people have been coming into Wyoming on one side of the territory or state, and exiting it at the other. The reason for this is basic, and it has nothing to do with the caliber of Wyoming's political establishment.

When people, whether residents or nonresidents of the state, talk about bringing Wyoming into the More Abundant Life surrounding it through "economic development" and "building infrastructure," what they really have in mind is replacing rural Western values, habits, and experience with urban, post-industrial ones. At the bottom of the day, the end of the line is that pep rallies cheering for a more dynamic and prosperous Wyoming amount to calls for a socially reconstructed one where people like Matthew Shepard are cosseted and admired as they are in Manhattan and L.A. and which does not embarrass absentee native sons like James Watt and Kathy Karpan (recently hostess with the mostest at a Washington dinner honoring lesbian and homosexual employees of the federal bureaucracy) when they get pistol-whipped with .357 Magnums instead. The campaign, though, isn't getting anywhere—not so far, at least—which is why this particular conference, like so many preceding ones, reeked of that pessimistic frustration characteristic of the Brahmin class whenever it finds itself stonewalled by the Untouchables, whose unappetizing existence is redeemable only to the extent that it is willing to Accept Change without back talk or stakhanovite resistance.

My return to Kemmerer after an absence of two years and one month was to attend the funeral of my godfather, William Peternal, caught by his baling machine while haying on the Hamsfork and pulled into the receiver. Outwardly, the town hadn't changed much—if anything it was spiffier than when I left, more flow-

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ers and newly planted trees, fresh coats of paint—but there had been other recent subtractions besides Bill; among them Scott McPhee (whom I remember as a Western Falstaff decanting scotch half a fifth at a time on the Commissary Commandos' annual foray into the wilderness), Chetty Buck (dead at 35 from the hantavirus "experts" claimed couldn't survive as far north as Wyoming), and Bill Thoman (struck by an oilfield worker's truck as he stood beside his pickup on a rig road, viewing a band of sheep out on the sagebrush flat through binoculars). I stayed over the weekend at Thoman Ranch, waiting for Don's Chevron to open up Monday morning and realign the front end of my truck after it had chewed two brand-new tires down to the steel belting on the 290-mile drive from Laramie, and catching up on the news with Mary, her mother Mickey (Bill's widow), Laurie, and Dick, one of several sons who lives with his family a few miles away across the Green River. Except for Bill's absence, nothing much seemed to have changed: The Thoman family was still pulling together to turn a profit in cattle and sheep in spite of depredations by bears, weather, the market, and the EPA. Mary and I ate out together Saturday night in Rock Springs; Sunday evening we had supper in Mickey's kitchen and went down to the sheep pens afterward to vaccinate the bucks. Bob Thoman, in Kemmerer with his family and in-laws for the funeral and wake, took the time before driving home to Riverton to show Laurie how to adjust the clutch on the Peterbilt truck she'd bought the year before and was using now to haul asphalt for the widening job on Highway 189 north from town. Dressed in old jeans and a torn plaid shirt, Miss Rodeo Wyoming 1994 joined her brother on her back under the chassis to see how the job was done. "You'll have to do this every ten or twelve thousand miles," Bob told her, "so be sure you understand exactly what it is I'm doing here."

Wyoming weather and geology—the cold, the aridity—are the principal reasons why business and a sizable labor force are in no hurry to gratify the state's postmodern boosters by moving here. And the reason the natives, and the transplants who feel like natives, don't want to see them come is their attachment to a deeper, better grounded, more human existence than what the New Westerners from Colorado and California would impose on them. Number One, the postmodern, high-tech, suburban life is impractical: In fact, it's deadly, a fishtrap for human beings. "We have all these people," Carolyn Chute says,

> who can't do anything who would have been farmers. They'd be surviving. They can't anymore: They're living in slums, trailer parks. . . . How many survival skills do your children have? How many kids today can provide for themselves food, tools, clothing, warmth?

Number Two, it doesn't satisfy—morally, spiritually, or even physically. Susan Faludi, in her new book *Stiffed*, analyzes what she calls "ornamental culture" (the culture of the last 30 years or more) which, being "[c]onstructed around celebrity and image, glamour and entertainment, marketing and consumerism, is a ceremonial gateway to nowhere." If women in the 1950's were significantly shaped by the male view of what a woman should be, more recently the transformation of a utilitarian culture into an ornamental one has feminized men by insisting on success through display rather than demonstration, surface instead of resource, the marketplace, not the workplace.

> A society of utility, for all the indisputable ways that it exploited men's health and labor, and in an industrial context broke the backs and spirits of factory workers and destroyed the lungs of miners, had one saving grace: it defined manhood by character, by the inner qualities of stoicism, integrity, reliability, the ability to shoulder burdens, the willingness to put others first, the desire to protect and provide and sacrifice.

In the new economy and the culture it is creating, men—and women—are often not certain what their job ("managing," "facilitating," "expediting," "coordinating,") *is*, let alone what use it has, what good it really does. What Susan Faludi does *not* appear to grasp is that the misdirection of the modern technostructure is not the problem, but its fundamental inhumanity. Most people are *made* to work with their hands, to work with tools that operate directly upon the natural world or on machinery: to pick clods of clotted earth from the turned fields, to sense the mouth of a bitted horse through the leather reins, to feel the warm blood of a freshly killed bear or elk on their hands, to cut down a living tree. For these experiences there is simply no substitute, and when the world has become a place where the large majority of the population knows nothing of them, while fearing and hating the minority who do, it will be a world running to Bedlam—and Columbine.

It's a pity, I guess, that some of the youth of Wyoming have to leave the state—or feel they do, perhaps encouraged by conferences like the recent one at UW—to find what politicians call "good-paying" jobs offering, besides money, "security" and "a future." Truth is, few if any jobs today offer either security *or* future (as Miss Faludi demonstrates). And, if that is so, why not, like the Thoman family, live where you like and do what you love doing? Is there any greater benefit or joy to be got from life? As for those native sons and daughters who can neither find a place in the local life and economy nor really wish to—well, Wyoming isn't going anywhere, the road they left by is still there, and Christmas and Thanksgiving make good excuses to visit home. Finally, there's retirement to look forward to (if the golf courses of Phoenix and the condominiums of Los Lunas, New Mexico, are not irresistible by then).

In the meantime, Wyoming remains the last best place for an American remnant knowing exactly who they are and what they want—and don't want—from life: a sort of reservation for leftover frontiersmen more than happy to share it with the disinherited tribes—the Arapahoe and Shoshone—whose society they prefer to that of the suburban swarm and the global mall-trotters. People who like living otherwise have already succeeded in taking over most of the rest of the country, so why begrudge us our measly 97,000 square miles of sagebrush and bentonite, ice and cold?

North of Durango, a cattle drive on Colorado 550 last fall ran into trouble at both ends when a southbound car topped a rise and plowed into the herd at 50 mph. Minutes later, an enraged motorist, encountering the drive from the rear, cursed the horsebackers from the open window of his car while repeatedly bumping the cows with its front end. If this man really is the face of the New West, then who needs him—and it? c

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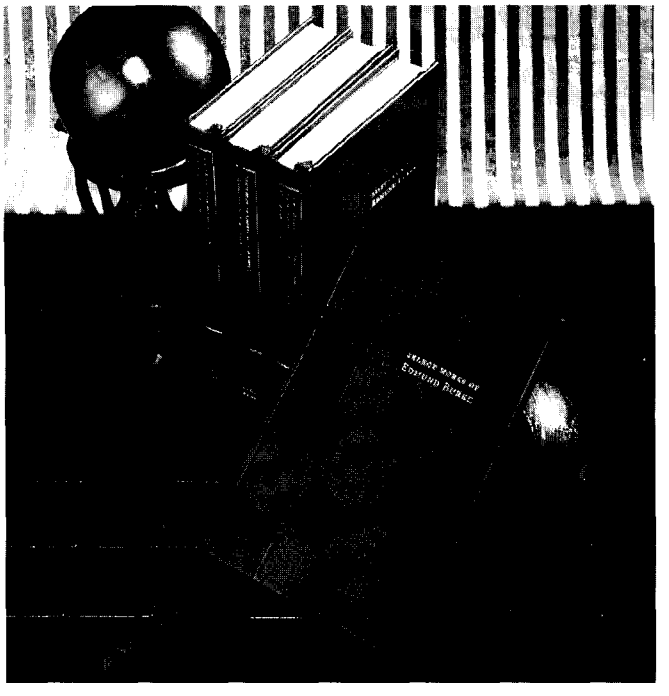

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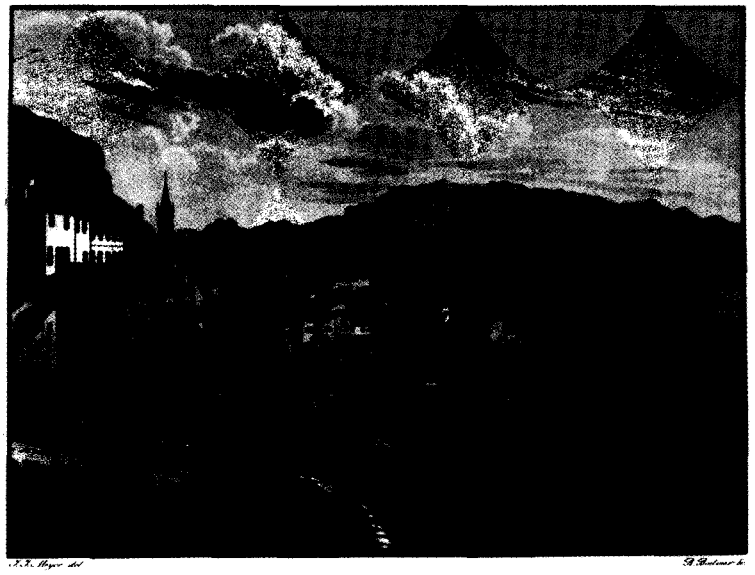

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